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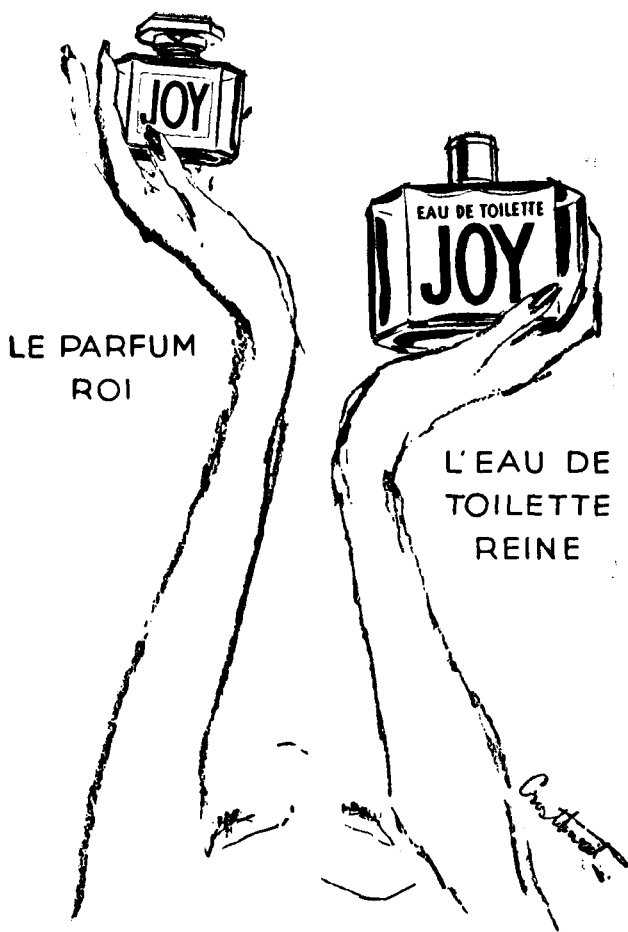
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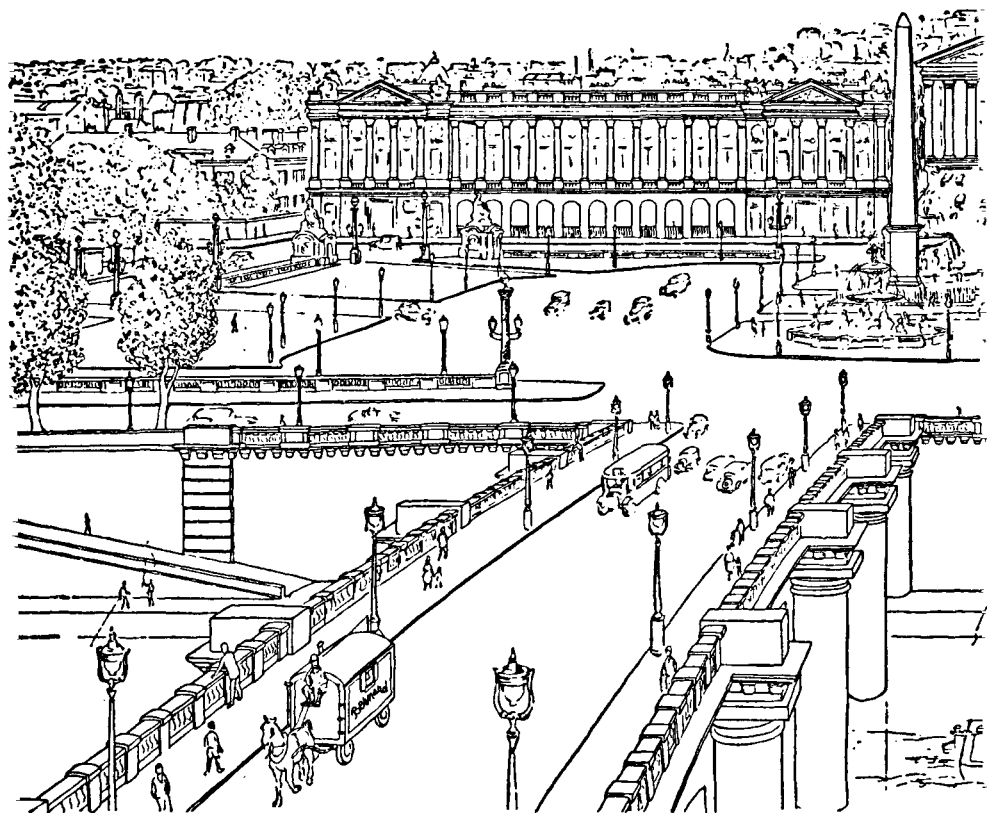
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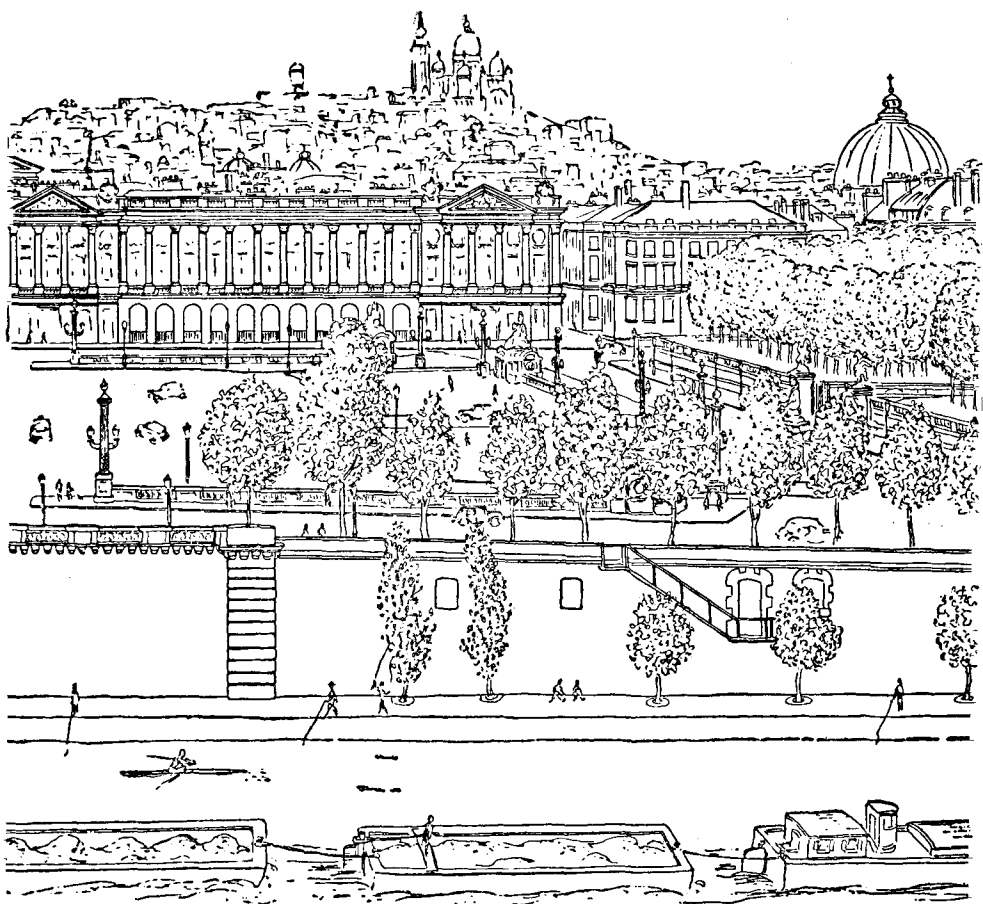
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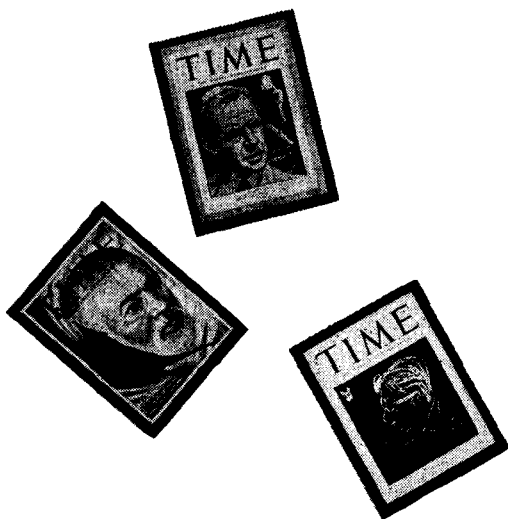
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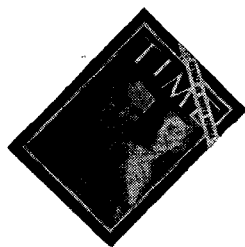
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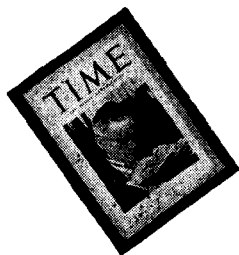
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Contents Page by Vali)



Philip Roth



the Conversion of the Jews

You're a real one for opening your mouth in the first place," Itzie said. "What do you open your mouth all the time for?"

"I didn't bring it up, Itz, I didn't," Ozzie said.

"What do you care about Jesus Christ for anyway?"

"I didn't bring up Jesus Christ. He did. I didn't even know what he was talking about. Jesus is historical, he kept saying. Jesus is historical." Ozzie mimicked the monumental voice of Rabbi Binder.

"Jesus was a person that lived like you and me," Ozzie continued. "That's what Binder said -"

"Yea?... So what! What do I give two cents whether he lived or not. And what do you gotta open your mouth!" Itzie Lieberman favored closed-mouthedness, especially when it

came to Ozzie Freedman's questions. Mrs. Freedman had to see Rabbi Binder twice before about Ozzie's questions and this Wednesday at four-thirty would be the third time. Itzie preferred to keep *his* mother in the kitchen; he settled for behind-the-back subtleties such as gestures, faces, snarls and other less delicate barnyard noises.

"He was a real person, Jesus, but he wasn't like God, and we don't believe he is God." Slowly, Ozzie was explaining Rabbi Binder's position to Itzie, who had been absent from Hebrew School the previous afternoon.

"The Catholics," Itzie said helpfully, "they believe in Jesus Christ, that he's God." Itzie Lieberman used "the Catholics" in its broadest sense – to include the Protestants.

Ozzie received Itzie's remark with a tiny head bob, as though it were a footnote, and went on. "His mother was Mary, and his father probably was Joseph," Ozzie said. "But the New Testament says his real father was God."

"His *real* father?"

"Yea," Ozzie said, "that's the big thing, his father's supposed to be God."

"Bull."

"That's what Rabbi Binder says, that it's impossible—"

"Sure it's impossible. That stuff's all bull. To have a baby you gotta get laid," Itzie theologized. "Mary hadda get laid."

"That's what Binder says: 'The only way a woman can have a baby is to have intercourse with a man'"

"He said *that*, Ozz?" For a moment it appeared that Itzie had put the theological question aside. "He said that, intercourse?" A little curled smile shaped itself in the lower half of Itzie's face like a pink mustache. "What you guys do, Ozz, you laugh or something?"

"I raised my hand."

"Yea? Whatja say?"

"That's when I asked the question."

Itzie's face lit up like a firefly's behind. "Whatja ask about—intercourse?"

"No, I asked the question about God, how if He could create the heaven and earth in six days, and make all the ani-

mals and the fish and the light in six days—the light especially, that’s what always gets me, that He could make the light. Making fish and animals, that’s pretty good—”

“That’s damn good.” Itzie’s appreciation was honest but unimaginative: it was as though God had just pitched a one-hitter.

“But making light... I mean when you think about it, it’s really something,” Ozzie said. “Anyway, I asked Binder if He could make all that in six days, and He could *pick* the six days He wanted right out of nowhere, why couldn’t He let a woman have a baby without having intercourse.”

“You said intercourse, Ozz, to Binder?”

“Yea.”

“Right in class?”

“Yea.”

Itzie smacked the side of his head.

“I mean, no kidding around,” Ozzie said, “that’d really be nothing. After all that other stuff, that’d practically be nothing.”

Itzie considered a moment. “What’d Binder say?”

“He started all over again explaining how Jesus was historical and how he lived like you and me but he wasn’t God. So I said I *understood* that. What I wanted to know was different.”

What Ozzie wanted to know was always different. The first time he had wanted to know how Rabbi Binder could call the Jews “The Chosen People” if the Declaration of Independence claimed all men to be created equal. Rabbi Binder tried to distinguish for him between political equality and spiritual legitimacy, but what Ozzie wanted to know, he insisted vehemently, was different. That was the first time his mother had to come.

Then there was the plane crash. Fifty-eight people had been killed in a plane crash at La Guardia, and in studying a casualty list in the newspaper his mother had discovered among the list of those dead eight Jewish names (his grandmother had nine but she counted Miller as a Jewish name); because of the eight she said the plane crash was “a tragedy”. During free-discussion time on Wednesday Ozzie had brought to Rabbi

Binder's attention this matter of "some of his relations" always picking out the Jewish names. Rabbi Binder had begun to explain cultural unity and some other things when Ozzie stood up at his seat and said that what he wanted to know was different. Rabbi Binder insisted that he sit down and it was then that Ozzie shouted that he wished all fifty-eight were Jews. That was the second time his mother came.

"And he kept explaining about Jesus being historical, and so I kept asking him. No kidding, Itz, he was trying to make me look stupid."

"So what he finally do?"

"Finally he starts screaming that I was deliberately simple-minded and a wise-guy, and that my mother had to come, and this was the last time. And that I'd never get bar-mitzvahed if he could help it. Then, Itz, then he starts talking in that voice like a statue, real slow and deep, and he says that I better think over what I said about the Lord. He told me to go to his office and think it over." Ozzie leaned his body towards Itzie. "Itz, I thought it over for a solid hour, and now I'm convinced God could do it."

Ozzie had planned to confess his latest transgression to his mother as soon as she came home from work. But it was a Friday night in November and already dark, and when Mrs. Freedman came through the door, she tossed off her coat, kissed Ozzie quickly on the face, and went to the kitchen table to light the three yellow candles, two for the Sabbath and one for Ozzie's father.

When his mother lit candles she would move her arms slowly towards her, dragging them through the air, as though persuading people whose minds were half made up. And her eyes would get glassy with tears. Even when his father was alive Ozzie remembered that her eyes had gotten glassy, so it didn't have anything to do with his dying. It had something to do with lighting the candles.

As she touched the flaming match to the unlit wick of a Sabbath candle, the phone rang, and Ozzie, standing only a foot from it, plucked it off the receiver and held it muffled to

his chest. When his mother lit candles Ozzie felt there should be no noise; even breathing, if you could manage it, should be softened. Ozzie pressed the phone to his breast and watched his mother dragging whatever she was dragging, and he felt his own eyes get glassy. His mother was a round, tired, grayhaired penguin of a woman whose gray skin had begun to feel the tug of gravity and the weight of her own history. Even when she was dressed up she didn't look like a chosen person. But when she lit candles she looked like something better; like a woman who knew momentarily that God could do anything.

After a few mysterious minutes she was finished. Ozzie hung up the phone and walked to the kitchen table where she was beginning to lay the two places for the four-course Sabbath meal. He told her that she would have to see Rabbi Binder next Wednesday at four-thirty, and then he told her why. For the first time in their life together she hit Ozzie across the face with her hand.

All through the chopped liver and chicken soup part of the dinner Ozzie cried; he didn't have any appetite for the rest.

On Wednesday in the largest of the three basement classrooms of the synagogue, Rabbi Marvin Binder, a tall, handsome, broad-shouldered man of thirty with thick strong-fibered black hair, removed his watch from his pocket and saw that it was four o'clock. At the rear of the room Yakov Blotnik, the seventy-one year old custodian, slowly polished the large window, mumbling to himself, unaware that it was four o'clock or six o'clock, Monday or Wednesday. To most of the students Yakov Blotnik's mumbling, along with his brown curly beard, scythe-nose, and two heel-trailing black cats, made of him an object of wonder, a foreigner, a relic towards whom they were alternately fearful and disrespectful. To Ozzie the mumbling had always seemed a monotonous, curious prayer; what made it curious was that old Blotnik had been mumbling so steadily for so many years Ozzie suspected he had memorized the prayers and forgotten all about God.

"It is now free-discussion time," Rabbi Binder said. "Feel free to talk about any Jewish matter at all—religion, family, politics, sports—"

There was silence. It was a gusty, clouded November afternoon and it did not seem as though there ever was or could be a thing called baseball. So nobody this week said a word about that hero from the past, Hank Greenberg—which limited free-discussion considerably.

And the soul-battering Ozzie Freedman had just received from Rabbi Binder had imposed its limitation. When it was Ozzie's turn to read aloud from the Hebrew book the rabbi had asked him petulantly why he didn't read more rapidly. He was showing no progress. Ozzie said he could read faster but that if he did he was sure not to understand what he was reading. Nevertheless, at the rabbi's repeated suggestion Ozzie tried, and showed a great talent, but in the midst of a long passage he stopped short and said he didn't understand a word he was reading, and started in again at a drag-footed pace. Then came the soul-battering.

Consequently when free-discussion time rolled around none of the students felt too free. The rabbi's invitation was answered only by the mumbling of feeble old Blotnik.

"Isn't there anything at all you would like to discuss?" Rabbi Binder asked again, looking at his watch. "No questions or comments?"

There was a small grumble from the third row. The rabbi requested that Ozzie rise and give the rest of the class the advantage of his thought.

Ozzie rose. "I forget it now," he said and sat down in his place.

Rabbi Binder advanced a seat towards Ozzie and poised himself on the edge of the desk. It was Itzie's desk and the rabbi's frame only a dagger's-length away from his face snapped him to sitting attention.

"Stand up again, Oscar," Rabbi Binder said calmly, "and try to assemble your thoughts."

Ozzie stood up. All his classmates turned in their seats and watched as he gave an unconvincing scratch to his forehead.

"I can't assemble any," he announced, and plunked himself down.

"Stand up!" Rabbi Binder advanced from Itzie's desk to the one directly in front of Ozzie; when the rabbinical back was turned Itzie gave it five-fingers off the tip of his nose, causing a small titter in the room. Rabbi Binder was too absorbed in squelching Ozzie's nonsense once and for all to bother with titters. "Stand up, Oscar. What's your question about?"

Ozzie pulled a word out of the air. It was the handiest word. "Religion."

"Oh, now you remember?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

Trapped, Ozzie blurted the first thing that came to him. "Why can't He make anything He wants to make!"

As Rabbi Binder prepared an answer, a final answer, Itzie, ten feet behind him, raised one finger on his left hand, gestured it meaningfully towards the rabbi's back, and brought the house down.

Binder twisted quickly to see what had happened and in the midst of the commotion Ozzie shouted into the rabbi's back what he couldn't have shouted to his face. It was a loud, toneless sound that had the timbre of something stored inside for about six days.

"You don't know! You don't know anything about God!"

The rabbi spun back towards Ozzie. "What?"

"You don't know—you don't—"

"Apologize, Oscar, apologize!" It was a threat.

"You don't—"

Like a snake's tongue, Rabbi Binder's hand flicked out at Ozzie's cheek. Perhaps it had only been meant to clamp the boy's mouth shut, but Ozzie ducked and the palm caught him squarely on the nose.

The blood came in a short, red spurt on to Ozzie's shirt front.

The next moment was all confusion. Ozzie screamed, "You bastard, you bastard!" and broke for the classroom door. Rabbi Binder lurched a step backwards, as though his own

blood had started flowing, violently in the opposite direction, then gave a clumsy lurch forward and bolted out the door after Ozzie. The class followed after the rabbi's huge blue-suited back, and before old Blotnik could turn from his window, the room was empty and everyone was headed full speed up the three flights leading to the roof.

If one should compare the light of day to the life of man: sunrise to birth; sunset—the dropping down over the edge—to death; then as Ozzie Freedman wiggled through the trapdoor of the synagogue roof—his feet kicking backwards bronco-style at Rabbi Binder's outstretched arms—at that moment the day was fifty years old. As a rule, fifty or fifty-five reflects accurately the age of late afternoons in November, for it is in that month, during those hours, that one's awareness of light seems no longer a matter of seeing, but of hearing: light begins clicking away. In fact, as Ozzie locked shut the trapdoor in the rabbi's face, the sharp click of the bolt into the lock might momentarily have been mistaken for the sound of the vast gray light that had just throbbed through the sky.

With all his weight Ozzie knelt on the locked door; any instant he was certain that Rabbi Binder's shoulder would fling it open, splintering the wood into shrapnel and catapulting his body into the sky. But the door did not move and below him he heard only the rumble of feet, first loud then dim, like thunder rolling away.

A question shot through his brain. "Can this be *me*?" For a thirteen year old who had just labeled his religious leader a bastard, twice, it was not an improper question. Louder and louder the question came to him—"Is it me? It is me?"—until he discovered himself no longer kneeling, but racing crazily towards the edge of the roof, his eyes crying, his throat screaming, and his arms flying every which way as though not his own.

"Is it me? Is it me Me ME ME ME! It has to be me—but is it!"

It is the question a thief must ask himself the night he jim-

mies open his first window, and it is said to be the question with which bridegrooms, quiz themselves before the altar.

In the few wild seconds it took Ozzie's body to propel him to the edge of the roof, his self-examination began to grow fuzzy. Gazing down at the street, he became confused as to the problem beneath the question: was it, is-it-me-who-called-Binder-a-Bastard? or, is-it-me-prancing-around-on-the-roof? However, the scene below settled all, for there is an instant in any action when whether it is you or somebody else is academic. The thief crams the money in his pockets and scoots out the window. The bridegroom signs the hotel register for two. And the boy on the roof finds a streetful of people gaping at him, necks stretched backwards, faces up, as though he were the ceiling of the Hayden Planetarium. Suddenly you know it's you.

"Oscar! Oscar Freedman!" A voice rose from the center of the crowd, a voice that, could it have been seen, would have looked like the writing on scroll. "Oscar Freedman, get down from there. Immediately!" Rabbi Binder was pointing one arm stiffly up at him; and at the end of that arm, one finger aimed menacingly. It was the attitude of a dictator, but one—the eyes confessed all—whose personal valet had spit neatly in his face.

Ozzie didn't answer. Only for a blink's length did he look towards Rabbi Binder. Instead his eyes began to fit together the world beneath him, to sort out people from places, friends from enemies, participants from spectators. In little jagged star-like clusters his friends stood around Rabbi Binder, who was still pointing. The topmost point on a star compounded not of angels but of five adolescent boys was Itzie. What a world it was, with those stars below, Rabbi Binder below... Ozzie, who a moment earlier hadn't been able to control his own body, started to feel the meaning of the word control: he felt Peace and he felt Power.

"Oscar Freedman, I'll give you three to come down."

Few dictators give their subjects three to do anything; but, as always, Rabbi Binder only looked dictatorial.

"Are you ready, Oscar?"

Ozzie nodded his head yes, although he had no intention in the world—the lower one or the celestial one he'd just entered—of coming down even if Rabbi Binder should give him a million.

"All right then," said Rabbi Binder. He ran a hand through his black Samson hair as though it were the gesture prescribed for uttering the first digit. Then, with his other hand, cutting a circle out of the small piece of sky around him, he spoke. "One!"

There was no thunder. On the contrary, at that moment, as though "one" was the cue for which he had been waiting, the world's least thunderous person appeared on the synagogue steps. He did not so much come out the synagogue door as lean out, onto the darkening air. He clutched at the doorknob with one hand and looked up at the roof.

"Oy!"

Yakov Blotnik's old mind hobbled slowly, as if on crutches, and though he couldn't decide precisely what the boy was doing on the roof, he knew it wasn't good—that is, it wasn't-good-for-the-Jews. For Yakov Blotnik life had fractionated itself simply: things were either good-for-the-Jews or no-good-for-the-Jews.

He smacked his free hand to his in-sucked cheek, gently. "Oy, Gut!" And then quickly as he could he jacked down his head and surveyed the street. There was Rabbi Binder (like a man at an auction with only three dollars in his pocket, he had just delivered a shaky "Two!"); there were the students, and that was all. So far it-wasn't-so-bad-for-the-Jews. But the boy had to come down immediately, before anybody saw. The problem: how to get the boy off the roof?

Anybody who has ever had a cat on the roof knows how to get him down. You call the fire department. Or first you call the operator and you ask her for the fire department. And the next thing there is a great jamming of brakes and clanging of bells and shouting of instructions. And then the cat is off the roof. You do the same thing to get a boy off the roof.

That is, you do the same thing if you are Yakov Blotnik and you once had a cat.

It took a short while for the engines, all four of them, to arrive. As it turned out Rabbi Binder had four times given Ozzie the count of three; had he not decided to stop, by the time the engines roared up he would have given him three one hundred and seven times.

The big hook-and-ladder was still swinging around the corner when one of the firemen leaped from it, plunged head-long towards the yellow fire hydrant in front of the synagogue, and with a huge wrench began unscrewing the top nozzle. Rabbi Binder raced over to him and pulled at his shoulder.

"There's no fire..."

The fireman mumbled something sounding like "Screw, buddy," back over his shoulder to him and, heatedly, continued working at the nozzle.

"But there's no fire, there's no fire..." Binder shouted. When the fireman mumbled again, the rabbi grasped his face with both his hands and pointed it up at the roof.

To Ozzie it looked as though Rabbi Binder was trying to tug the fireman's head out of his body, like a cork from a bottle. He had to giggle at the picture they made: it was a family portrait—rabbi in black skullcap, fireman in red fire-hat, and the little yellow hydrant squatting beside like a kid brother, bareheaded. From the edge of the roof Ozzie waved at the portrait, a one-handed, flapping, mocking wave; in doing it his right foot slipped from under him. Rabbi Binder covered his eyes with his hands.

Firemen work fast. Before Ozzie had even regained his balance, a big, round, yellowed net was being held on the synagogue lawn. The firemen who held it looked up at Ozzie with stern, feelingless faces.

One of the fireman turned his head towards Rabbi Binder. "What, is the kid nuts or something?"

Rabbi Binder unpeeled his hands from his eyes, slowly, painfully, as if they were tape. Then he checked: nothing on the sidewalk, no dents in the net.

"Is he gonna jump, or what?" the fireman shouted.

In a voice not at all like a statue, Rabbi Binder finally

answered. "Yes, yes, I think so... He's been threatening to..."

Threatening to? Why, the reason he was on the roof, Ozzie remembered, was to get away; he hadn't even thought about jumping. He had just run to get away, and the truth was that he hadn't really headed for the roof as much as he'd been chased there.

"What's his name, the kid?"

"Freedman," Rabbi Binder answered. "Oscar Freedman."

The fireman looked up at Ozzie. "What is it with you, Oscar? You gonna jump, or what?"

Ozzie did not answer. Frankly, the question had just arisen.

"Look, Oscar, if you're gonna jump, jump—and if you're not gonna jump, don't jump. But don't waste our time, willya?"

Ozzie looked at the fireman and then at Rabbi Binder. He wanted to see Rabbi Binder cover his eyes one more time.

"I'm going to jump."

And then he scampered around the edge of the roof to the corner, where there was no net below, and he flapped his arms at his sides, swishing the air and smacking his palms to his trousers on the downbeat; he began screaming like some kind of engine, "Wheeeee... wheeeee," and leaning way out over the edge with the upper half of his body. The firemen whipped around to cover the ground with the net. Rabbi Binder mumbled a few words to Somebody and covered his eyes. Everything happened quickly, jerkily, as in a silent movie. The crowd, which had arrived with the fire-engines, gave out a long, Fourth-of-July fireworks, oooh-aahhh. In the excitement no one had paid the crowd much heed, except, of course, Yakov Blotnik, who swung from the doorknob counting heads. "Fier und tsvansik... finf und tsvantsik... Oy, Gut!" It wasn't like this with the cat.

Rabbi Binder peeked through his fingers, checked the sidewalk and net. Empty. But there was Ozzie racing to the other corner of the roof. The firemen raced with him but were unable to keep up. Whenever Ozzie wanted to he might

jump and splatter himself upon the sidewalk, and by the time the firemen scooted to the spot all they could do with their net would be to cover the mess.

"Wheeeee... wheeeee..."

"Hey, Oscar," the winded fireman yelled, "what the hell is this, a game or something?"

"Wheeeee... wheeeee..."

"Hey, Oscar—"

But he was off now to the other corner, flapping his wings fiercely. Rabbi Binder couldn't take it any longer—the fire-engines from nowhere, the screaming suicidal boy, the net. He fell to his knees exhausted, and with his hands curled together in front of his chest like a little dome, he pleaded, "Oscar, stop it, Oscar. Don't jump, Oscar. Please come down... Please don't jump."

And further back in the crowd a single voice, a single young voice, shouted a long word to the boy on the roof.

"Jump!"

It was Itzie. Ozzie momentarily stopped flapping.

"Go ahead, Ozz—jump!" Itzie broke off his point of the star and courageously, with the inspiration not of a wise-guy but of a disciple, stood alone. "Jump, Ozz, jump!"

Still on his knees, his hands still curled, Rabbi Binder twisted his body back. He looked at Itzie, then, agonizingly, back up to Ozzie.

"Oscar, DON'T JUMP! PLEASE, DON'T JUMP... please please..."

"Jump!" This time it wasn't Itzie but another point of the star. By the time Mrs. Freedman arrived to keep her four-thirty appointment with Rabbi Binder, the whole little upside down heaven was shouting and pleading for Ozzie to jump, and Rabbi Binder no longer was pleading with him not to jump, but was crying into the dome of his hands.

Understandably Mrs. Freedman couldn't figure out what her son was doing on the roof. So she asked.

"Ozzie, my Ozzie, what are you doing? My Ozzie, what is it?"

Ozzie stopped wheeeeeing and slowed his arms down to a cruising flap, the kind birds use in soft winds, but he did not answer. He stood against the low, clouded, darkening sky—light was clicking down more swiftly now, as on a small gear—flapping softly and gazing down at the small bundle of a woman who was his mother.

“What are you doing, Ozzie?” She turned toward the kneeling Rabbi Binder and rushed so close that only a paper-thickness of dusk lay between her stomach and his shoulders.

“What is my baby doing?”

Rabbi Binder gaped up at her but he too was mute. All that moved was the dome of his hands; it shook back and forth like a weak pulse.

“Rabbi, get him down! He’ll kill himself. Get him down, my only baby...”

“I can’t,” Rabbi Binder said, “I can’t...” and he turned his handsome head toward the crowd of boys behind him.

“It’s them. Listen to them.”

And for the first time Mrs. Freedman saw the crowd of boys and she heard what they were yelling.

“He’s doing it for them. He won’t listen to me. It’s them.” Rabbi Binder spoke like one in a trance.

“For them?”

“Yes.”

“Why for them?”

“They want him to...”

Mrs. Freedman raised her two arms upward as though she were conducting the sky. “For them he’s doing it!” And then in a gesture older than pyramids, older than prophets and floods, her arms came slapping down to her sides. “A martyr I have. Look!” She tilted her head to the roof. Ozzie was still flapping softly. “My martyr.”

“Oscar, come down, *please*,” Rabbi Binder groaned.

In a startlingly even voice Mrs. Freedman called to the boy on the roof. “Ozzie, come down, Ozzie. Don’t be a martyr, my baby.”

Like a litany, Rabbi Binder repeated her words. “Don’t be a martyr, my baby. Don’t be a martyr.”

"Gawhead, Ozz—*be* a Martin!" It was Itzie. "Be a Martin, be a Martin," and all the voices joined in singing for Martin-dom. "Be a Martin, be a Martin..."

Somehow when you're on a roof the darker it gets the less you can hear. All Ozzie knew was that two groups wanted two new things: his friends were spirited and musical about what they wanted; his mother and the rabbi were even-toned, chanting, about what they didn't want. The rabbi's voice was without tears now and so was his mother's.

The big net stared up at Ozzie like a sightless eye. The big, clouded sky pushed down. From beneath it looked like a gray corrugated board. Suddenly, looking up into that unsympathetic sky, Ozzie realized all the strangeness of what these people, his friends, were asking: they wanted him to jump, to kill himself; they were singing about it now—it made them that happy. And there was an even greater strangeness: Rabbi Binder was on his knees, trembling. If there was a question to be asked now it was not, "Is it me?" but rather, "Is it us?"... is it us?"

Being on the roof, it turned out, was a serious thing. If he jumped would the singing become dancing? Would it? What would jumping stop? Yearningly, Ozzie wished he could rip open the sky, plunge his hands through, and pull out the sun; and on the sun, like a coin, would be stamped JUMP or DONT JUMP.

Ozzie's knees rocked and sagged a little under him as though they were setting him for a dive. His arms tightened, stiffened, froze, from shoulders to fingernails. He felt as if each part of his body were going to vote as to whether he should kill himself or not—and each part as though it were independent of *him*.

The light took a long, loud, unexpected click down and the new darkness quickly, like a gag, hushed the friends singing for this and the mother and rabbi chanting for that.

Ozzie stopped counting votes, and in a curiously high voice, like one who wasn't prepared for speech, he spoke.

"Mamma!"

"Yes, Oscar."

"Mamma, get down on your knees, like Rabbi Binder."

"Oscar—"

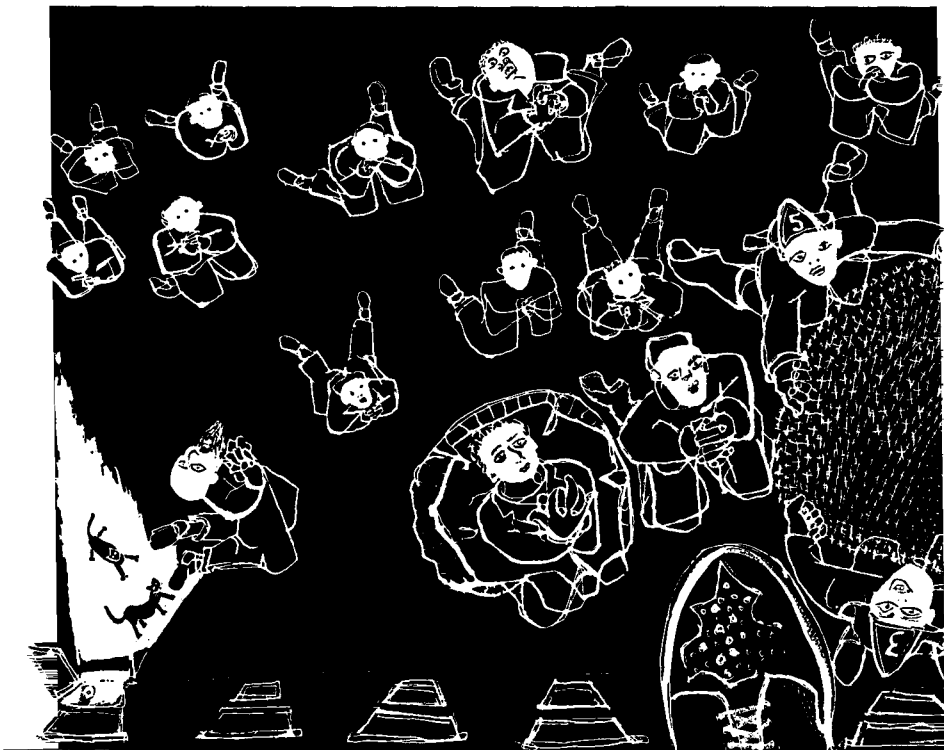
"Get down on your knees," he said, "or I'll jump."

Ozzie heard a whimper, then a quick rustling, and when he looked down where his mother had stood he saw the top of a head and beneath that a circle of dress. She was kneeling beside Rabbi Binder.

He spoke again. "Everybody kneel." There was the sound of everybody kneeling.

Ozzie looked around. With one hand he pointed toward the synagogue entrance. "Make *him* kneel."

There was a noise, not of kneeling, but of body-and-cloth stretching. Ozzie could hear Rabbi Binder saying in a gruff whisper, "...or he'll *kill* himself," and when next he looked there was Yakov Blotnik off the doorknob and for the first



time in his life upon his knees in the Gentile posture of prayer.

As for the firemen—it is not as difficult as one might imagine to hold a net taut while you are kneeling.

Ozzie looked around again; and then, still in the voice high as a young girl's, he called to Rabbi Binder.

"Rabbi?"

"Yes, Oscar."

"Rabbi Binder, do you believe in God?"

"Yes."

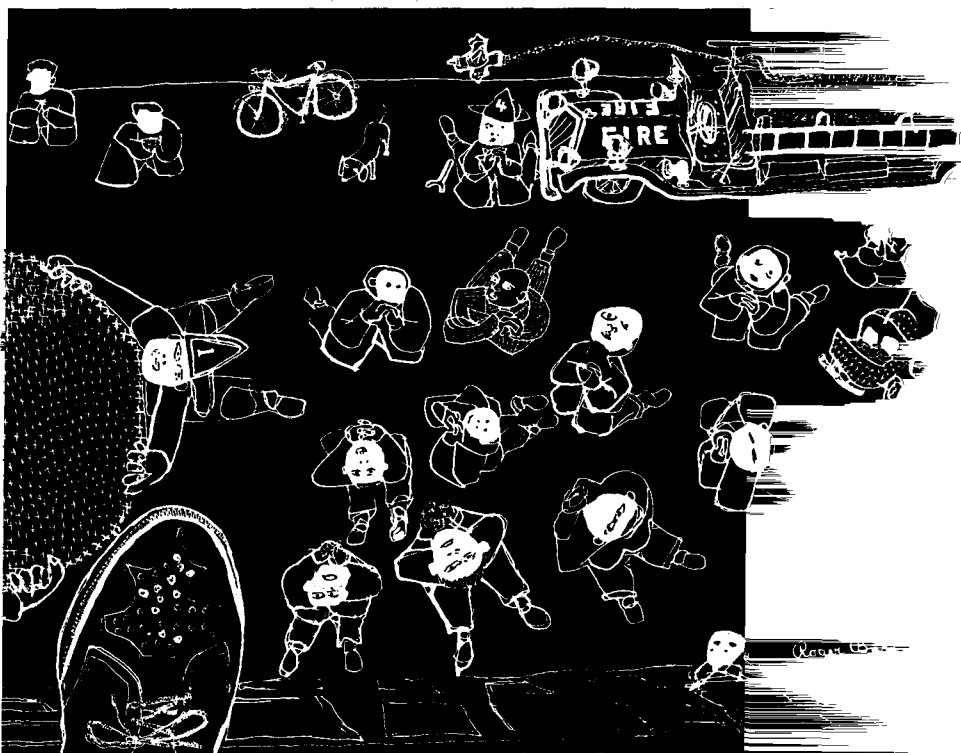
"Do you believe God can do Anything?" Ozzie leaned his head out into the darkness. "Anything?"

"Oscar, I think—"

"Tell me you believe God can do Anything."

There was a second's hesitation. Then:

"God can do Anything."



"Tell me you believe God can make a child without intercourse."

"He can."

"Tell me!"

"God," Rabbi Binder admitted, "can make a child without intercourse."

"Mamma, you tell me."

"God can make a child without intercourse," his mother said.

"Make *him* tell me." There was no doubt who *him* was.

In a few moments Ozzie heard an old comical voice say something to the increasing darkness about God.

Next, Ozzie made everybody say it. And then he made them all say they believed in Jesus Christ—first one at a time, then all together.

When the catechizing was through it was the beginning of evening. From the street it sounded as if someone on the roof might have sighed.

"Ozzie?" A woman's voice dared to speak. "You'll come down now?"

There was no answer, but the woman waited, and when a voice finally did speak it was thin and crying, and exhausted as that of an old man who has just finished pulling the bells.

"Mamma, don't you see—you shouldn't hit me. He shouldn't hit me. You shouldn't hit me about God, Mamma. You should never hit anybody about God—"

"Ozzie, please come down now."

"Promise me, Mamma, promise me you'll never hit anybody about God."

He had asked only his mother, but for some reason everyone kneeling in the street promised he would never hit anybody about God.

Once again there was silence.

"I can come down now, Mamma," the boy on the roof finally said. He turned his head both ways as though checking the traffic lights. "Now I can come down..."

And he did, right into the center of the yellow net that glowed in the evening's edge like an overgrown halo.

TWO POEMS

BY LOUIS SIMPSON

OLD SOLDIER

A dream of battle on a windy night
Has wakened him. The shadows move once more
With rumors of alarm. He sees the height
And helmet of his terror in the door.

The guns reverberate; a livid arc
From sky to sky lightens the windowpanes
And all his room... The clock ticks in the dark,
A cool wind stirs the curtains, and it rains.

He lies remembering: "That's how it was..."
And smiles, and drifts into a youthful sleep
Without a care. His life is all he has,
And that is given to the guards to keep.

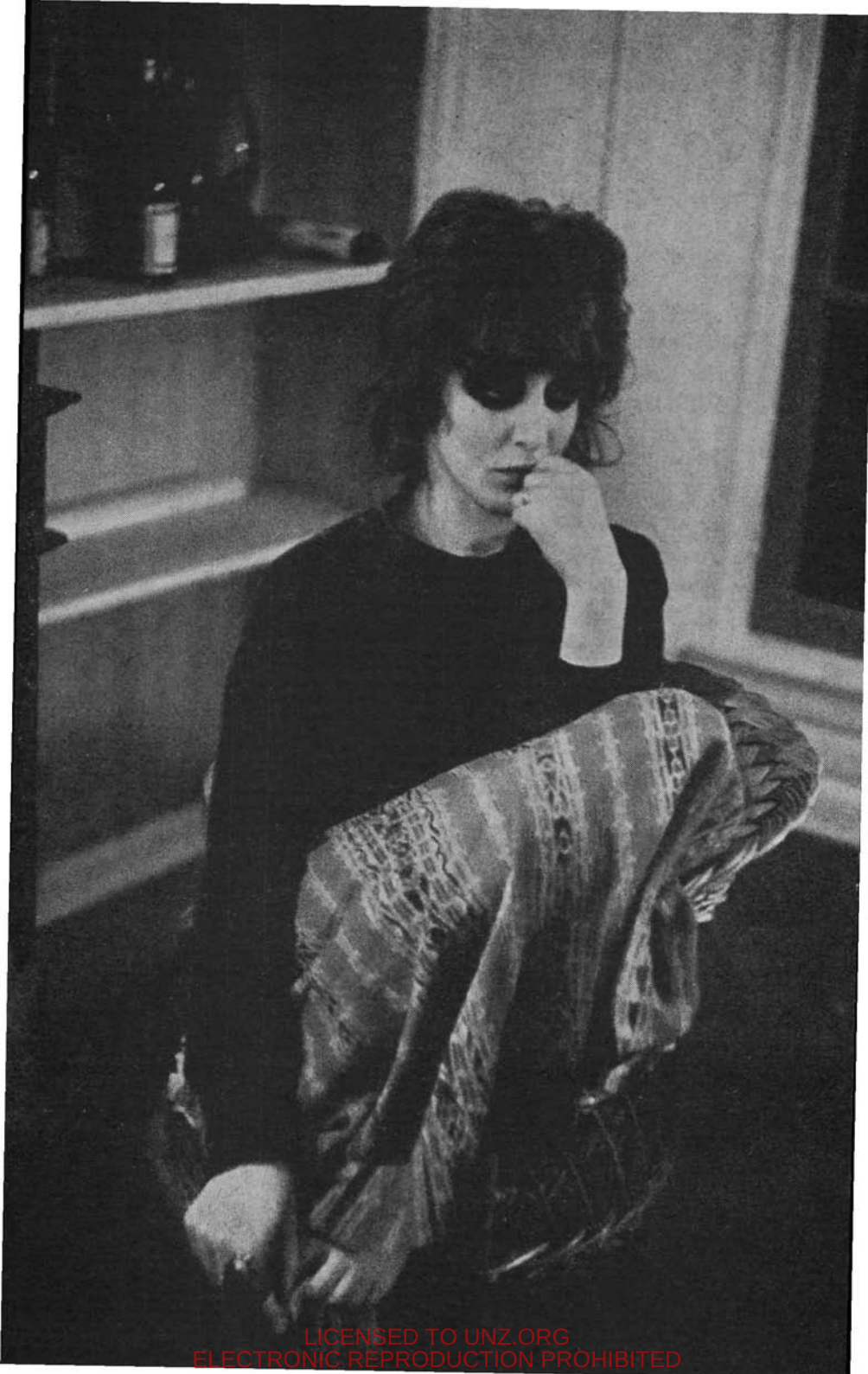
ILLUSIONS OF THE MOONLIGHT

Illusions of the moonlight, pale processions
Of spirits wandering among the trees...
Cries and accusations and confessions...

Even in Hell, said my instructor, these
Accuse themselves. Their own hand plies the stroke
That draws no blood from their faint substances.

They, in the world that is remembered, spoke
The word "I love," and broke that word. Although
Justice might be persuaded to revoke

Their punishment, they would not have it so.



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THE girl in the photograph opposite and whose drawings follow is Vali Myers. In Paris, where she lives, she goes under other names: bartenders in the little *boîtes* where she dances call her *le chat*; concierges refer to her as *la bête*; she is also called variously *l'enfant du feu* for her flaming copper-red almost orange hair, and *la morte vive* for her corpse-white face and heavy eye-shadow—a cosmetic oddity which started an *existentialiste* fashion that enjoyed a minor vogue a few years ago. She is Australian by birth. Her father is a sailor and her mother a violinist in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Vali came to France just after the war. Still under twenty she became at once the symbol and plaything of the restless, confused, vice-enthralled, demi-monde that populated certain of the cafés and *boîtes* of the Left Bank—La Petite Source, Le Mabillon, Le Café Metro, La Chope Gauloise, Le Monaco.

She is the subject of a book entitled *Love on the Left Bank* (published by André Deutsch) which describes the 'hipster' group which frequented these cafés. The book includes a mawkish and unfortunate text, but amazing photographs—graphic studies of Vali and her friends, young faces, always sad, drug-haunted, and topped with ferocious crops of hair. The majority of the photographs are group portraits crowded with faces, but rarely faces of animation—each subject apart from the other so that often the collection seems a study of asylum inmates.

Prominent throughout the book are the photographs of Vali—close-ups of her extraordinary face, a phantom-face that befits the Paris backgrounds of the night-time empty streets, the crumbling and leaning buildings of the Latin Quarter, and the dark and smoke-

laden *boîtes* where Vali danced in a tight ring of spectators to the rhythm of African bush songs.

Her dancing is remarkable—a sinuous shuffling, bent-kneed, her shoulders and hands moving at trembling speed to the drumbeats. She wears blue jeans, a man's shirt pulled in at the waist by a wide black belt, and worn red ballet slippers that she often kicks off to dance in flat-splayed barefeet. Her audience, almost always men, stare at her rather than watch, and it is curious that their feet never tap to the splurge of African music, nor do hands or fingers tap out the time—an absorption on the part of her spectators that is solely visual. A friend explains it as follows: "I watched her dance and I never heard the music. I said to her 'Man, how can you dance like that? You must be a missing link.' And that was it. Like I guess Kiki of Montparnasse was for those people in the twenties, Vali was the same for us. You saw in her the personalization of something torn and loose and deep-down primitive in all of us—and, Man, you could see it moving right around in front of you in ballet slippers and a man's shirt."

Vali never danced in a professional stage show. She preferred the tiny square-footage cleared for her in little clubs such as l'Escale on the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, or the Rose Rouge; on Saturday she would invariably turn up at the vast ballroom of the Bal Nègre on the Rue Blomet—there to dance hour after hour with the Senegalese, dancers from the Cameroons, from Martinique, taking them on one after the other and leaving them staggered with exhaustion.

Occasionally, someone impressionable and rich enough would slip her a few hundred francs. But Vali, in her early days in Paris, lived on practically nothing. Her few belongings were scattered throughout the Quarter in cafés, chambres de bonnes, in studios where she would sometimes sit for an artist. She carried her prize possessions with her in a wire carrying-case shaped like a bird-cage. In it she had a bandana, her eye make-up and face powder, a volume of poetry by Thomas Chatterton, her art materials, and a curious piece of fur shaped like a miniature fox with two bead eyes embedded at one end: a keepsake she refers to as 'the feeley' and which she talks to from time to time, and often dusts, heavily, with face powder.

Cosmetics constitute an important part of Vali's life. It takes her over an hour to make herself up in the morning. First she slaps her face, lips included, pure-white with face powder; then

with infinite care she paints an inch-wide circle of black eye-shadow around her eyes. The preparation she uses is called kohl—a combination of oil and a black dust from India. The result is not only for show; Vali likes to point out the utilitarian value of her make-up. “In the East, you know,” she says, “they use this eye stuff to keep out evil. The flies won’t cross the black. It might look strange to people, but the Gods in Tibet are ugly too and they keep away the bad things.”

After Vali has put on her face she runs her hands through a twisted and unruly growth of orange hair that reaches her waist and she is ready for the day.

The aspect she presents to the outside world is naturally a most striking one; Vali can recall a number of instances when people have suddenly come upon her around a corner and have screamed. Most women are appalled by her. The writer Gabriel Pommerand points out in an essay on Vali that “women can only regard her aspect with contempt since she disobeys every last law of conventional beauty.” Some women, though, particularly from the world of fashion, are charmed by her manner and personality. They give her bolts of material out of which she makes floor-length house-ropes. The reaction of men is completely human. They enjoy watching her dance; many have fallen in love with her; many are amused by her company in the sense that one might enjoy being accompanied, as Pommerand writes, by “a cheetah on a leash.”

Communicating with Vali is not easy. Vali’s discernment of the world around her is on the simplest plane of sensory perception. Asked where she comes from in Australia she will not reply with the name of a town, or geographical location, or distances in miles, but will say, “Behind me is the lagoon... you can smell it... and beyond it the sea which you can’t see but you can hear it no matter where you go in the bush... the bush is crazy... a tree here and a tree there... in each tree a kookaburra, a bird what laughs like a crazy jackass... and he goes into the grass... flies up again and takes the snake and whacks the head against a branch... whck... whck... whck”—this in the cockney-like Australian accent, the voice thin and slow, interspersed with the ‘hipster’ language she has picked up in the Paris cafes.

Vali has almost no general knowledge. Her interests are particular and esoteric. She knows the works of Edward Fitzgerald, Edith Sitwell, reads Emily Bronte every day, and is copying out the works of Yeats and one day will have his collected works in her childish

round hand. She is devoted to the Irish poets—impressed by them, among other reasons, because she mistakenly believes them all to have died at a very early age. Almost any artist who has died young interests Vali. The great literary figure in her life, for example, is the eighteenth-century English poet Thomas Chatterton. On her bedside table she keeps a postcard reproduction of the poet's death painted by Henry Wallis—the original hangs in the Pre-Raphaelite section of London's Tate Gallery—showing the poet, his hair as red as Vali's and almost as abundant, collapsed across a bed from a fatal dose of arsenic taken just before his eighteenth birthday.

Chatterton is not a well-known poet; but his failure, his precocity, his misery, the romantic turn to his verse, his suicide—all of it has had a combustive effect on Vali. She herself had plans to do away with herself on her twenty-third birthday. Her closest friends were invited to watch, to sit at the foot of her bed while she lay on it with her 'feeley' tucked in beside her, and, unaware of the legal consequences that would befall her audience as accessories before and to the fact, she was to swallow arsenic while they watched.

Two years ago Vali renounced some of her strange urges, married a young Austrian architect, and gave up her café-wanderings for a tiny room in a hotel on the rue des Canettes near St. Germain-des-Prés—a hotel run by a woman called Celeste who is said to have been Proust's housekeeper. Celeste, bizarre enough herself, is one of the few women who appreciate Vali. "Ah!" she says, "You are going up to see the strange one, my favorite jewel."

With marriage Vali's life has changed. Though she continues to paint up her face and still dances—to the music of a single cracked record played on an ancient wind-up victrola—she rarely leaves her room for her old haunts. She refers to her past as 'that old time of the cafés,' 'that weird time,' and speaks of having escaped what was a 'little like a battlefield.' She is happy in marriage and with the boxed-in security of a little room which is lighted dully by electricity and smells strongly of Egyptian incense. She has cut herself off from the outside world. The single window facing on the street is shielded by heavy curtains which have scarcely been opened since Vali and her husband moved in. Vali has seen little sunlight in two years. She hates the sunlight and in her early days in Paris when circumstances drove her on occasion into the daytime streets she hugged the buildings, keeping to the shadows,

and across open streets she would run—her arm thrown up to shield her face from the sun. The night-time, and the moon, she loves, and never leaves the hotel until long after dusk—usually at midnight, to forage with her husband in the streets and gutters for tinsel paper on bon-bon and cigarette packages. The two use the tinsel paper to make tiny and wispish mobiles which are so delicate that suspended from the ceiling in that airless room they can shudder and revolve in the force of a laugh.

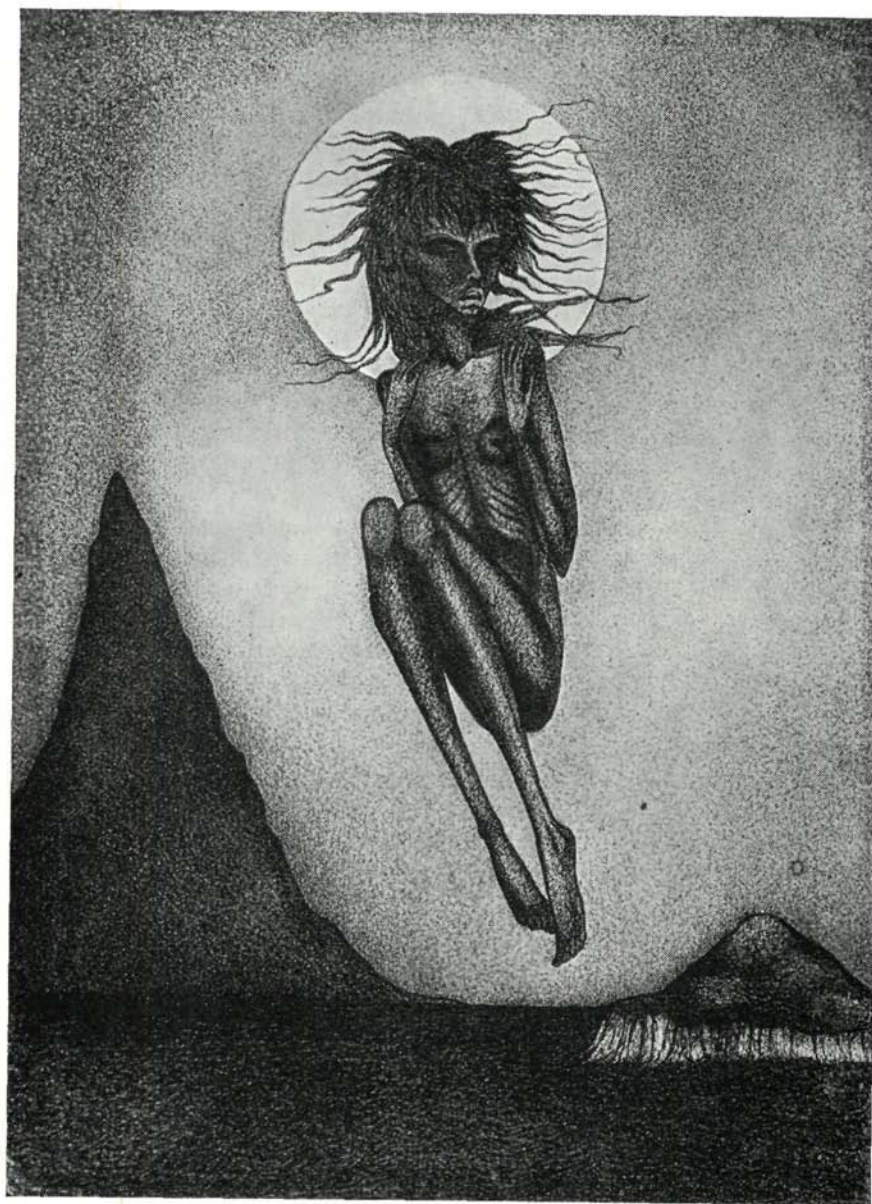
Tinsel paper has also been used in the careful construction of minuscule replicas of human figures which stand on the bedside table. They are of Vali herself, her husband, the 'feeley', and a few of their belongings—a bed, Vali's red ballet shoes. When the two go on a trip, this family is packed carefully in a little box and goes along with them. In the manner of the pagan image-worshippers Vali takes almost a manic care of these tiny figures—their welfare closely and mystically indented with her own.

Almost all the artifacts in the room have an equivalently mystical identification. And the same can be said of Vali's drawings. She speaks of them as manifestations of an urge for peace and security. She draws mainly self-portraits—Beardsley-like reflections of herself, usually lying in a death-stiff attitude on a bed; she is asleep (or dead), composed, guarded by owls and five-petaled flowers which are among the devices she considers good luck. Five is her 'protective number'; she insisted on room 15 in the hotel (room 5 was permanently occupied by another resident), and has tattooed on her foot a flower with five petals which she did herself with a needle and colored inks. "I need my owls and my flowers," she says, "to keep away the bad things. I am very naughty."

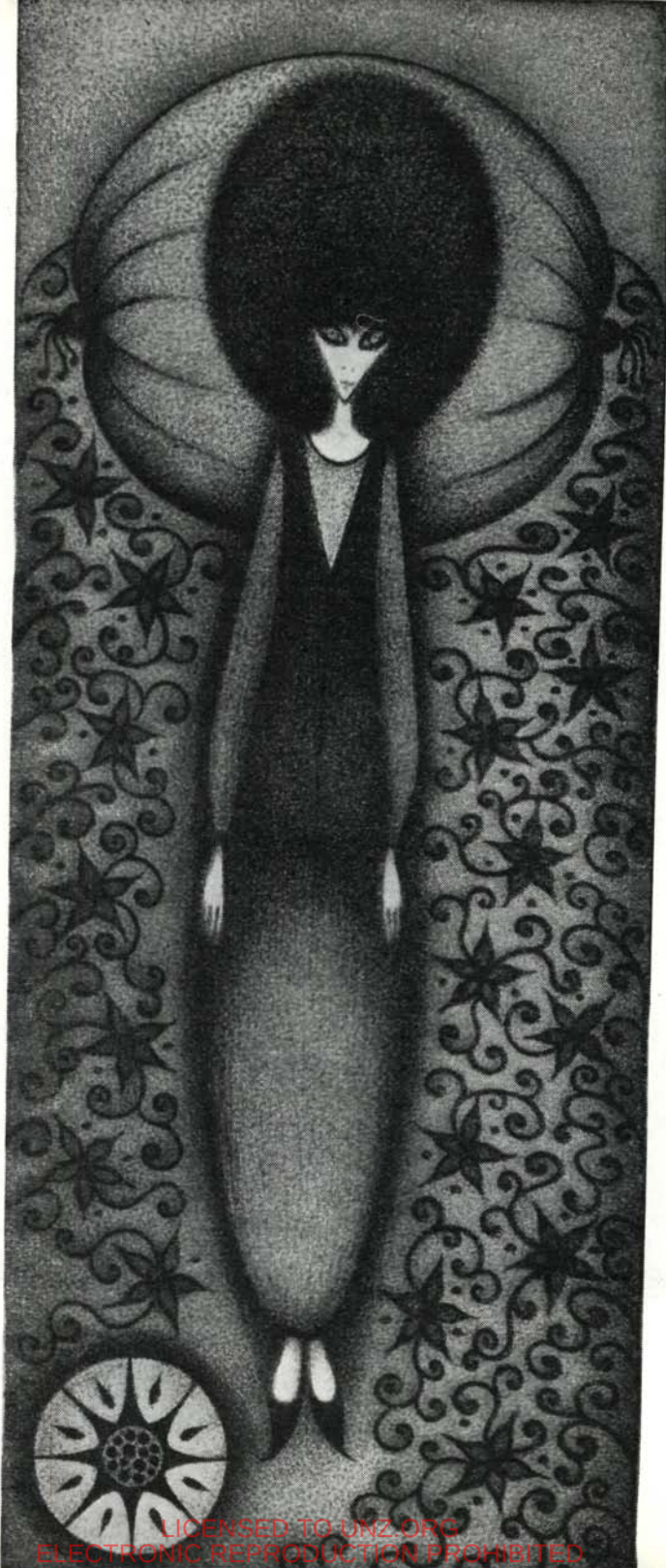
The drawings sometimes take Vali as many as two years to complete. In her early days she worked on them at the café tables, eyes smarting in the smoke as she touched an English-made fine-nibbed pen across the paper "like a fly"—each touch made with the care of a Persian miniature painter with his brush of a cat tail hair.

Once completed, Vali refuses to sell her drawings. It is not a matter of the time she has expended on them, but simply that her identification with each is such that a sale would destroy a prop she needs to support her bizarre existence. The drawings are, in effect, preservatives of life according to the extraordinary and lonely canon which she has created for herself.

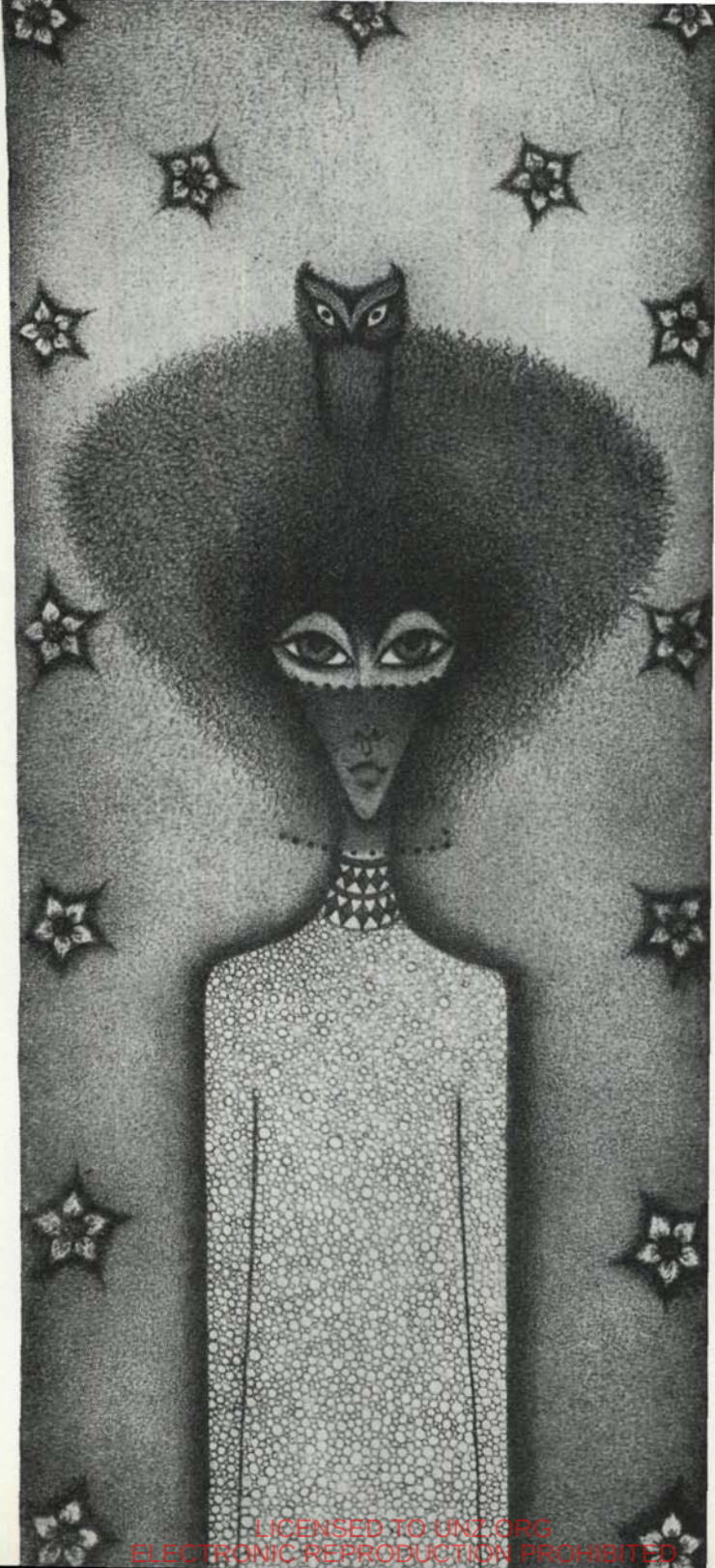
—G. A. P.







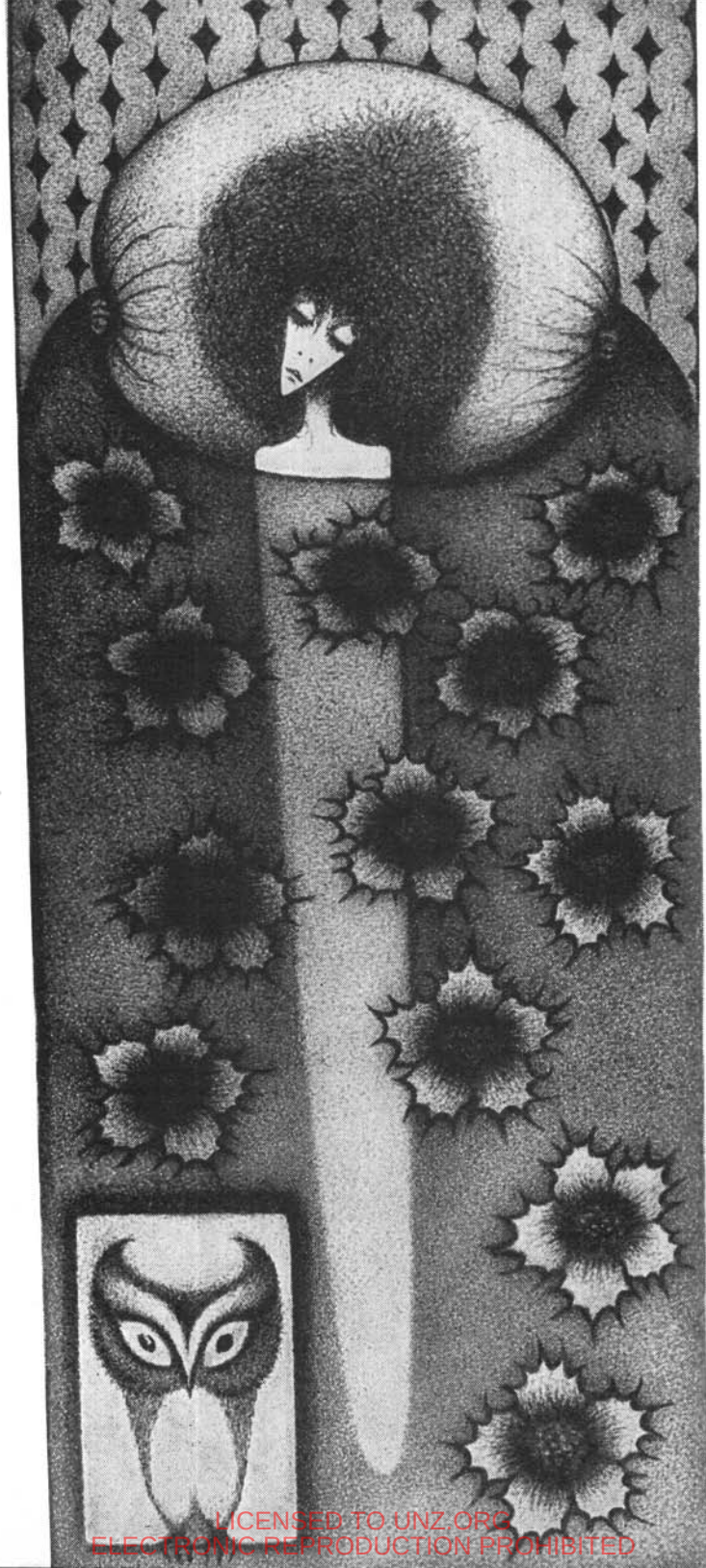
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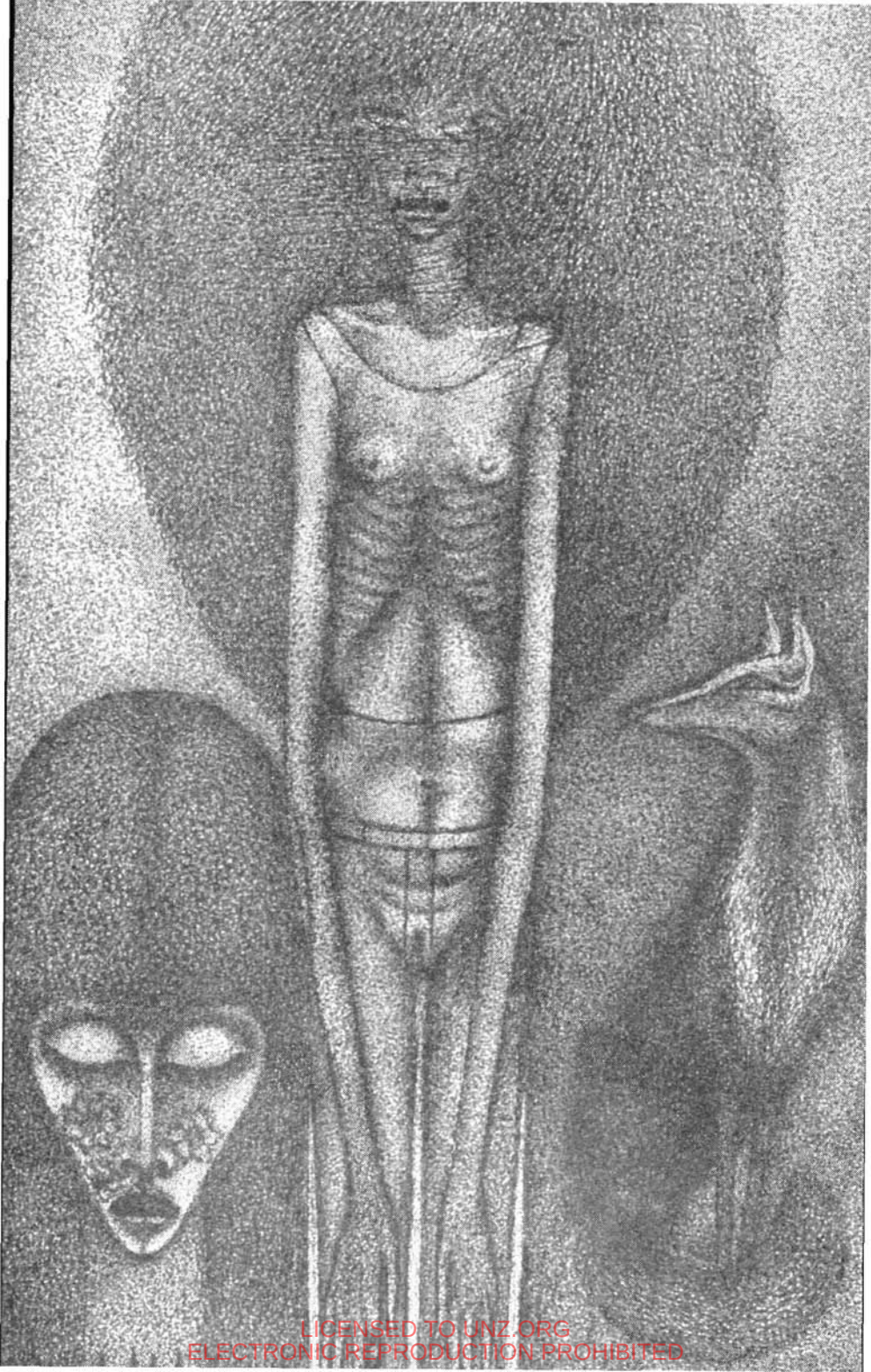
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With only darkness
for a lover

London 54

LORD CHANDOS TO HIS WIFE

(The speaker, taken from Hofmannsthal's story, is a young Renaissance nobleman, to whom all forms in which experience is normally ordered have become absurd. He is speaking to his wife, as they both face outward through a window looking onto a garden.)

Murdered me; why I have no thoughts at all.
Run your hands along my temples where something
Beats like a sea with no land, or a cry
Timbreless, unhouselled of any throat.
For dry, dry that full April tongue will call
And only the treacherous, magian spring
Striding through the ferns with potent thigh
Will hear, subtle with ear of ram and stoat.
What did you expect to find in this head?
Some center, some knowledgable grace,
The hierachy of custom's sweetness?
These are sick and, murdering, have murdered me.
When you turn, sun-veiled, sun-given, to my face,
I know nothing of you except that nothingness
I dote on. From our chaining flesh we are free,
With all names put by, all duties dead.

You misunderstand. We are not free for love,
But for being, as when, in year's last spring,
The well suddenly lipped its emptiness
And the beetle at its rim called me there.
Within the miracle of the changing air,
That gossamer, black body grew a thing
Palpable, lurched upon the world's fullness
To come upon my speech like dust, to move
In me the dominion of his dying.
Then all thresholds seemed to take April
Within the tidy dungeons of my brain.

And lust, grown cold in familiar flame,
Returned in the loose unfolding of the rain,
Not for possession by the brutal will
And not for use—only as the incautious sighing
Of the grasses that would green my human name.

Often, I had thought of waking thus: with birds
Somewhere in a stumbling aviary,
My head new, my tongue fresh beyond flaw.
I would sob my bird-grief and shake my beak
And one, touching my temples, would hear words
Not better made by the rook and jackdaw.
And this had come. (Stay with me... I speak
Only of that dream in which we always die.)
Consider the great world on such a day:
The furred horizon and the antlered west
Worked in me their poise, and the wind's plumage spoke
A light more tenuous than departure.
Starting from that dream, on a seamless quest,
I sought your certitudes. But the day
Betrayed me, and love's sweet alembic broke
In the season's fist and bled with its scar.

So I left the bright syntax of my youth.
When that was done, what could I seek but thing
Of roundness, of tensions, of currents claimed
By this new earth, adamant and unseen?
This was the logic that the bone retained,
And more: the high, deep-patterned grass, the sheen
On the blackest roach, the light on the wings
Of hawks as they moved, whose silver flared its truth
Above the groan of summer: then globes grown too large,
Corollas unfolding and within, the lip
Torn by the kiss of the sun leaning
To the geometric shudder of the buds!
Between the pollen and the pall of time, what targe
Of speech could fight those warming floods?
I saw the full rose break flame at its tip
Through all the months of the earth's hot dreaming.

Then autumn leapt, the dancer whose red art
Attempted every posture, every ruin
Without discord. In motley air the sound
Of her passing shook leaves upon my eyes
And held from profanation the ground
Of this seeing. Where, if not in the heart,
Did the chestnuts thud their grief and bark stiffen
Against October's amniotic cries
When we came into our classic dying?
Walking in snow, I saw the intricacy
Of loss, the Daedalean labors kept
By winter's craftsmen. Silent, unattended,
My mind grew shapeless as the field lying
Below our sills: gusty, pure, from which a sigh
Blew off, as though the handleless Parcae wept
To see their fabric mended...

What restless, plenary sea then sought me?
Windows pitched; I heard terraces buckle
In the assaults, the great chordal fires
Of March winds. And, in my pedant's room,
Crevices like dreams opened craftily,
Pages turned to grass and the sharp tickle
Of new death rose upon my palm's desire.
I heard in churchyards dusted by the moon
The dicing laugh of dead philosophers,
While below the pastoral, foolish lawns,
The seeds of this labyrinth tried to sing.
Laughing, I made apothegems of dirt
And with a dying rhetorician's lures
Held only a captive worm... The long hurt
Of the year's body then turned beyond all horns.
I stood on summit earth in man's first spring.

These words fall like fading motes upon your flesh
And are changed before I speak again. Driven
To words, driven beyond them, I cannot yield
What you would wrest from me and bearing, bear.

Leaning, I cup your breast and the mesh
Of your hair undone is the cleft of air
Through which I fall. O thief, O trampled field,
Making and remaking what was given
Only once, where are the selving shadows
We once cherished, each to each other and alone?
If we love, let it be as wraiths that move
Silently along that crystalline wall
Where twilight takes the sill and turns the bone
To coral like our west. What god knows
Our inner names? What gestures may yet prove
We are more than parchments claim or call?...

At year's end, this loosening and this sleep.
Language is the ultimate adultery,
Farthest from the flawed antennae dancing
In the hurricane of sense. You see this cup?
It is a perilous transparency,
Nothing I have known, brilliancy dancing
The end, the loosening, the sleep
That are burning my tinder language up.
Hard flesh fruit and the bark of waking trees
Anneal me... there can be no more names.
A garden grows in me, its brimming well
Ringing in my brain, ringing me its lip and home.
Let me stand. The sun busies in my skull
Stitching its truth within the April flames,
And, taut from Primavera's palms, the lucid bees
Affirm I am Her fragment and Her foam.

—D. J. HUGHES

"I could take it," the man said. "Don't you think I could take it, kid?"

"You bet."

"They all hurt their hands on me," the little man said. "They couldn't hurt me."

He looked at Nick.

"Set down," he said. "Want to eat?"

"~~Yeah~~ ^{Sure}," ~~Howard said~~ Nick said. "I'm hungry."

"Listen," the man said, "Call me Ad."

"Sure."

"Listen," the ~~man~~ little man said. "I'm not quite right."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm crazy."

He put on his cap. Nick felt like laughing.

"You're all right," he said.

"No I'm not. I'm crazy. Listen, you ever been crazy?"

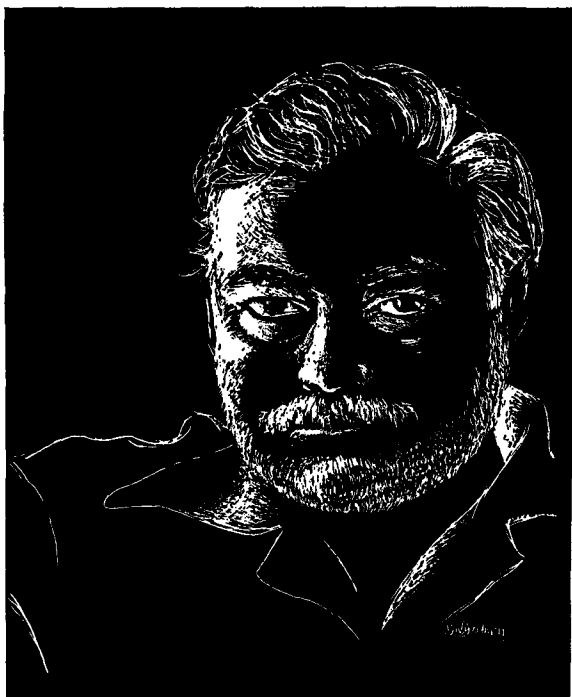
"No," Nick said. "How does it get you?"

"I don't know," Ad said, "When you got it you don't know about it. You know me don't you?"

"No."

"I'm ad Francis."

"Really?"



Bee W. Dabney

THE ART OF FICTION XXI

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

HEMINGWAY

You go to the races?

INTERVIEWER

Yes, occasionally.

HEMINGWAY

Then you read the *Racing Form*... there you have the true Art of Fiction.

—Conversation in a Madrid cafe, May, 1954

Ernest Hemingway writes in the bedroom of his home in the Havana suburb of San Francisco de Paula. He has a

special workroom prepared for him in a square tower at the south-west corner of the house, but prefers to work in his bedroom, climbing to the tower-room only when "characters" drive him up there.

The bedroom is on the ground floor and connects with the main room of the house. The door between the two is kept ajar by a heavy volume listing and describing "The World's Aircraft Engines". The bedroom is large, sunny, the windows facing east and south letting in the day's light on white walls and a yellow-tinged tile floor.

The room is divided into two alcoves by a pair of chest-high bookcases that stand out into the room at right angles from opposite walls. A large and low double-bed dominates one section, over-sized slippers and loafers neatly arranged at the foot, the two bedside tables at the head piled seven-high with books. In the other alcove stands a massive flat-top desk with two chairs at either side, its surface an ordered clutter of papers and mementos. Beyond it, at the far end of the room, is an armoire with a leopard skin draped across the top. The other walls are lined with white-painted bookcases from which books overflow to the floor, and are piled on top amongst old newspapers, bullfight journals, and stacks of letters bound together by rubber bands.

It is on the top of one of these cluttered bookcases—the one against the wall by the east window and three feet or so from his bed—that Hemingway has his "work-desk"—a square foot of cramped area hemmed in by books on one side and on the other by a newspaper-covered heap of papers, manuscripts, and pamphlets. There is just enough space left on top of the bookcase for a typewriter, surmounted by a wooden reading-board, five or six pencils, and a chunk of copper ore to weight down papers when the wind blows in from the east window.

A working habit he has had from the beginning, Hemingway stands when he writes. He stands in a pair of his over-sized loafers on the worn skin of a Lesser Kudu—the typewriter and the reading-board chest-high opposite him.

When Hemingway starts on a project he always begins

with a pencil, using the reading-board to write on onion-skin typewriter paper. He keeps a sheaf of the blank paper on a clipboard to the left of the typewriter, extracting the paper a sheet at a time from under a metal clip which reads "These Must Be Paid". He places the paper slantwise on the reading-board, leans against the board with his left arm, steadying the paper with his hand, and fills the paper with handwriting which in the years has become larger, more boyish, with a paucity of punctuation, very few capitals, and often the period marked with an x. The page completed, he clips it face-down on another clipboard which he places off to the right of the typewriter.

Hemingway shifts to the typewriter, lifting off the reading-board, only when the writing is going fast and well, or when the writing is, for him at least, simple: dialogue, for instance.

He keeps track of his daily progress—"so as not to kid myself"—on a large chart made out of the side of a cardboard packing case and set up against the wall under the nose of a mounted gazelle head. The numbers on the chart showing the daily output of words differ from 450, 575, 462, 1250, to 512, the higher figures on days Hemingway puts in extra work so he won't feel guilty spending the following day fishing on the Gulf Stream.

A man of habit, Hemingway does not use the perfectly suitable desk in the other alcove. Though it allows more space for writing, it too has its miscellany: stacks of letters, a stuffed toy lion of the type sold in Broadway nighteries, a small burlap bag full of carnivore teeth, shotgun shells, a shoe-horn, wood carvings of lion, rhino, two zebras, and a wart-hog—these last set in a neat row across the surface of the desk—and, of course, books. You remember books of the room, piled on the desk, bedside tables, jamming the shelves in indiscriminate order—novels, histories, collections of poetry, drama, essays. A look at their titles shows their variety. On the shelf opposite Hemingway's knees as he stands up to his "work-desk" are Virginia Woolf's *The Common Reader*, Ben Ames Williams' *House Divided*, *The Partisan Reader*, Charles A. Beard's *The Republic*, Tarle's *Napoleon's Invasion of*

Russia, *How Young You Look* by one Peggy Wood, Alden Brook's *Shakespeare and the Dyer's Hand*, Baldwin's *African Hunting*, T. S. Eliot's *Collected Poems*, and two books on General Custer's fall at the battle of the Little Big Horn.

The room, however, for all the disorder sensed at first sight, indicates on inspection an owner who is basically neat but cannot bear to throw anything away—especially if sentimental value is attached. One bookcase top has an odd assortment of mementos: a giraffe made of wood beads, a little cast-iron turtle, tiny models of a locomotive, two jeeps and a Venetian gondola, a toy bear with a key in its back, a monkey carrying a pair of cymbals, a miniature guitar, and a little tin model of a U.S. Navy biplane (one wheel missing) resting awry on a circular straw placemat—the quality of the collection that of the odds-and-ends which turn up in a shoe-box at the back of a small boy's closet. It is evident, though, that these tokens have their value, just as three buffalo horns Hemingway keeps in his bedroom have a value dependent not on size but because during the acquiring of them things went badly in the bush which ultimately turned out well. "It cheers me up to look at them," Hemingway says.

Hemingway may admit superstitions of this sort, but he prefers not to talk about them, feeling that whatever value they may have can be talked away. He has much the same attitude about writing. Many times during the making of this interview he stressed that the craft of writing should not be tampered with by an excess of scrutiny—"that though there is one part of writing that is solid and you do it no harm by talking about it, the other is fragile, and if you talk about it, the structure cracks and you have nothing."

As a result, though a wonderful raconteur, a man of rich humor, and possessed of an amazing fund of knowledge on subjects which interest him, Hemingway finds it difficult to talk about writing—not because he has few ideas on the subject, but rather that he feels so strongly that such ideas should remain unexpressed, that to be asked questions on them "spooks" him (to use one of his favorite expressions) to the point where he is almost inarticulate. Many of the replies in

this interview he preferred to work out on his reading-board. The occasional waspish tone of the answers is also part of this strong feeling that writing is a private, lonely occupation with no need for witnesses until the final work is done.

This dedication to his art may suggest a personality at odds with the rambunctious, carefree, world-wheeling Hemingway-at-play of popular conception. The point is, though, that Hemingway, while obviously enjoying life, brings an equivalent dedication to everything he does—an outlook that is essentially serious, with a horror of the inaccurate, the fraudulent, the deceptive, the half-baked.

Nowhere is the dedication he gives his art more evident than in the yellow-tiled bedroom—where early in the morning Hemingway gets up to stand in absolute concentration in front of his reading-board, moving only to shift weight from one foot to another, perspiring heavily when the work is going well, excited as a boy, fretful, miserable when the artistic touch momentarily vanishes—slave of a self-imposed discipline which lasts until about noon when he takes a knotted walking stick and leaves the house for the swimming pool where he takes his daily half-mile swim.



INTERVIEWER

Are these hours during the actual process of writing pleasurable?

HEMINGWAY

Very.

INTERVIEWER

Could you say something of this process? When do you work? Do you keep to a strict schedule?

HEMINGWAY

When I am working on a book or a story I write every morning as soon after first light as possible. There is no one to disturb you and it is cool or cold and you come to your

work and warm as you write. You read what you have written and, as you always stop when you know what is going to happen next, you go on from there. You write until you come to a place where you still have your juice and know what will happen next and you stop and try to live through until the next day when you hit it again. You have started at six in the morning, say, and may go on until noon or be through before that. When you stop you are as empty, and at the same time never empty but filling, as when you have made love to someone you love. Nothing can hurt you, nothing can happen, nothing means anything until the next day when you do it again. It is the wait until the next day that is hard to get through.

INTERVIEWER

Can you dismiss from your mind whatever project you're on when you're away from the typewriter?

HEMINGWAY

Of course. But it takes discipline to do it and this discipline is acquired. It has to be.

INTERVIEWER

Do you do any re-writing as you read up to the place you left off the day before? Or does that come later, when the whole is finished?

HEMINGWAY

I always re-write each day up to the point where I stopped. When it is all finished, naturally you go over it. You get another chance to correct and re-write when someone else types it, and you see it clean in type. The last chance is in the proofs. You're grateful for these different chances.

INTERVIEWER

How much re-writing do you do?

HEMINGWAY

It depends. I re-wrote the ending to *Farewell to Arms*, the last page of it, thirty-nine times before I was satisfied.

INTERVIEWER

Was there some technical problem there? What was it that had stumped you?

HEMINGWAY

Getting the words right.

INTERVIEWER

Is it the re-reading that gets the "juice" up?

HEMINGWAY

Re-reading places you at the point where it *has* to go on, knowing it is as good as you can get it up to there. There is always juice somewhere.

INTERVIEWER

But are there times when the inspiration isn't there at all?

HEMINGWAY

Naturally. But if you stopped when you knew what would happen next, you can go on. As long as you can start, you are all right. The juice will come.

INTERVIEWER

Thornton Wilder speaks of mnemonic devices that get the writer going on his day's work. He says you once told him you sharpened twenty pencils.

HEMINGWAY

I don't think I ever owned twenty pencils at one time. Wearing down seven No. 2 pencils is a good day's work.

INTERVIEWER

Where are some of the places you have found most advantageous to work? The Ambos Mundos hotel must have been one, judging from the number of books you did there. Or do surroundings have little effect on the work?

HEMINGWAY

The Ambos Mundos in Havana was a very good place to work in. This Finca is a splendid place, or was. But I have worked well everywhere. I mean I have been able to work as well as I can under varied circumstances. The telephone and visitors are the work destroyers.

INTERVIEWER

Is emotional stability necessary to write well. You told me once that you could only write well when you were in love. Could you expound on that a bit more?

HEMINGWAY

What a question. But full marks for trying. You can write any time people will leave you alone and not interrupt you. Or rather you can if you will be ruthless enough about it. But the best writing is certainly when you are in love. If it is all the same to you I would rather not expound on that.

INTERVIEWER

How about financial security? Can that be a detriment to good writing?

HEMINGWAY

If it came early enough and you loved life as much as you loved your work it would take much character to resist the temptations. Once writing has become your major vice and greatest pleasure only death can stop it. Financial security then is a great help as it keeps you from worrying. Worry destroys the ability to write. Ill health is bad in the ratio that it produces worry which attacks your subconscious and destroys your reserves.

INTERVIEWER

Can you recall an exact moment when you decided to become a writer?

HEMINGWAY

No, I always wanted to be a writer.

INTERVIEWER

Philip Young in his book on you suggests that the traumatic shock of your severe 1918 mortar wound had a great influence on you as a writer. I remember in Madrid you talked briefly about his thesis, finding little in it, and going on to say that you thought the artist's equipment was not an acquired characteristic, but inherited, in the Mendelian sense.

HEMINGWAY

Evidently in Madrid that year my mind could not be called very sound. The only thing to recommend it would be that I spoke only briefly about Mr. Young's book and his trauma theory of literature. Perhaps the two concussions and a skull fracture of that year had made me irresponsible in my statements. I do remember telling you that I believed imagination could be the result of inherited racial experience. It sounds all right in good jolly post-concussion talk, but I think that is more or less where it belongs. So until the next liberation trauma, let's leave it there. Do you agree? But thanks for leaving out the names of any relatives I might have implicated. The fun of talk is to explore, but much of it and all that is irresponsible should not be written. Once written you have to stand by it. You may have said it to see whether you believed it or not. On the question you raised, the effects of wounds vary greatly. Simple wounds which do not break bone are of little account. They sometimes give confidence. Wounds which do extensive bone and nerve damage are not good for writers, nor anybody else.

INTERVIEWER

What would you consider the best intellectual training for the would-be writer?

HEMINGWAY

Let's say that he should go out and hang himself because he finds that writing well is impossibly difficult. Then he should be cut down without mercy and forced by his own self to write as well as he can for the rest of his life. At least he will have the story of the hanging to commence with.

INTERVIEWER

How about people who've gone into the academic career? Do you think the large numbers of writers who hold teaching positions have compromised their literary careers?

HEMINGWAY

It depends on what you call compromise. Is the usage that of a woman who has been compromised? Or is it the compromise of the statesman? Or the compromise made with your grocer or your tailor that you will pay a little more but will pay it later? A writer who can both write and teach should be able to do both. Many competent writers have proved it could be done. I could not do it, I know, and I admire those who have been able to. I would think though that the academic life could put a period to outside experience which might possibly limit growth of knowledge of the world. Knowledge, however, demands more responsibility of a writer and makes writing more difficult. Trying to write something of permanent value is a full-time job even though only a few hours a day are spent on the actual writing. A writer can be compared to a well. There are as many kinds of wells as there are writers. The important thing is to have good water in the well and it is better to take a regular amount out than to pump the well dry and wait for it to re-fill. I see I am getting away from the question, but the question was not very interesting.

INTERVIEWER

Would you suggest newspaper work for the young writer? How helpful was the training you had with the *Kansas City Star*?

HEMINGWAY

On the *Star* you were forced to learn to write a simple, declarative sentence. This is useful to anyone. Newspaper work will not harm a young writer and could help him if he gets out of it in time. This is one of the dustiest cliches there is and I apologize for it. But when you ask someone old tired questions you are apt to receive old tired answers.

INTERVIEWER

You once wrote in the *Transatlantic Review* that the only reason for writing journalism was to be well-paid. You said: "And when you destroy the valuable things you have by writing about them, you want to get big money for it." Do you think of writing as a type of self-destruction?

HEMINGWAY

I do not remember ever writing that. But it sounds silly and violent enough for me to have said it to avoid having to bite on the nail and make a sensible statement. I certainly do not think of writing as a type of self-destruction though journalism, after a point has been reached, can be a daily self-destruction for a serious creative writer.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think the intellectual stimulus of the company of other writers is of any value to an author?

HEMINGWAY

Certainly.

INTERVIEWER

In the Paris of the twenties did you have any sense of "group feeling" with other writers and artists?

HEMINGWAY

No. There was no group feeling. We had respect for each other. I respected a lot of painters, some of my own age, others older—Gris, Picasso, Braque, Monet, who was still alive then—and a few writers: Joyce, Ezra, the good of Stein...

INTERVIEWER

When you are writing, do you ever find yourself influenced by what you're reading at the time?

HEMINGWAY

Not since Joyce was writing *Ulysses*. His was not a direct

influence. But in those days when words we knew were barred to us, and we had to fight for a single word, the influence of his work was what changed everything, and made it possible for us to break away from the restrictions.

INTERVIEWER

Could you learn anything about writing from the writers? You were telling me yesterday that Joyce, for example, couldn't bear to talk about writing.

HEMINGWAY

In company with people of your own trade you ordinarily speak of other writers' books. The better the writers the less they will speak about what they have written themselves. Joyce was a very great writer and he would only explain what he was doing to jerks. Other writers that he respected were supposed to be able to know what he was doing by reading it.

INTERVIEWER

You seem to have avoided the company of writers in late years. Why?

HEMINGWAY

That is more complicated. The further you go in writing the more alone you are. Most of your best and oldest friends die. Others move away. You do not see them except rarely, but you write and have much the same contact with them as though you were together at the cafe in the old days. You exchange comic, sometimes cheerfully obscene and irresponsible letters, and it is almost as good as talking. But you are more alone because that is how you must work and the time to work is shorter all the time and if you waste it you feel you have committed a sin for which there is no forgiveness.

INTERVIEWER

What about the influence of some of these people—your contemporaries—on your work? What was Gertrude Stein's contribution, if any? Or Ezra Pound's? Or Max Perkins'?

HEMINGWAY

I'm sorry but I am no good at these post-mortems. There are coroners literary and non-literary provided to deal with such matters. Miss Stein wrote at some length and with considerable inaccuracy about her influence on my work. It was necessary for her to do this after she had learned to write dialogue from a book called *The Sun Also Rises*. I was very fond of her and thought it was splendid she had learned to write conversation. It was no new thing to me to learn from everyone I could, living or dead, and I had no idea it would affect Gertrude so violently. She already wrote very well in other ways. Ezra was extremely intelligent on the subjects he really knew. Doesn't this sort of talk bore you? This backyard literary gossip while washing out the dirty clothes of thirty-five years ago is disgusting to me. It would be different if one had tried to tell the whole truth. That would have some value. Here it is simpler and better to thank Gertrude for everything I learned from her about the abstract relationship of words, say how fond I was of her, re-affirm my loyalty to Ezra as a great poet and a loyal friend, and say that I cared so much for Max Perkins that I have never been able to accept that he is dead. He never asked me to change anything I wrote except to remove certain words which were not then publishable. Blanks were left, and anyone who knew the words would know what they were. For me he was not an editor. He was a wise friend and a wonderful companion. I liked the way he wore his hat and the strange way his lips moved.

INTERVIEWER

Who would you say are your literary forebears—those you have learned the most from?

HEMINGWAY

Mark Twain, Flaubert, Stendhal, Bach, Turgeniev, Tolstoi, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Andrew Marvel, John Donne, Maupassant, the good Kipling, Thoreau, Captain Marryat, Shakespeare, Mozart, Quevedo, Dante, Virgil, Tintoretto,

Hieronimus Bosch, Breughel, Patinier, Goya, Giotto, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, San Juan de la Cruz, Gongora—it would take a day to remember everyone. Then it would sound as though I were claiming an erudition I did not possess instead of trying to remember all the people who have been an influence on my life and work. This isn't an old dull question. It is a very good but a solemn question and requires an examination of conscience. I put in painters, or started to, because I learn as much from painters about how to write as from writers. You ask how this is done? It would take another day of explaining. I should think what one learns from composers and from the study of harmony and counterpoint would be obvious.

INTERVIEWER

Did you ever play a musical instrument?

HEMINGWAY

I used to play cello. My mother kept me out of school a whole year to study music and counterpoint. She thought I had ability, but I was absolutely without talent. We played chamber music—someone came in to play the violin; my sister played the viola, and mother the piano. That cello—I played it worse than anyone on earth. Of course, that year I was out doing other things too.

INTERVIEWER

Do you re-read the authors of your list. Twain, for instance?

HEMINGWAY

You have to wait two or three years with Twain. You remember too well. I read some Shakespeare every year, *Lear* always. Cheers you up if you read that.

INTERVIEWER

Reading, then, is a constant occupation and pleasure.

HEMINGWAY

I'm always reading books—as many as there are. I ration myself on them so that I'll always be in supply.

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever read manuscripts?

HEMINGWAY

You can get into trouble doing that unless you know the author personally. Some years ago I was sued for plagiarism by a man who claimed that I'd lifted *For Whom the Bell Tolls* from an unpublished screen scenario he'd written. He'd read this scenario at some Hollywood party. I was there, he said, at least there was a fellow called "Ernie" there listening to the reading, and that was enough for him to sue for a million dollars. At the same time he sued the producers of the motion-pictures *North-West Mounted Police* and the *Cisco Kid*, claiming that these, as well, had been stolen from that same unpublished scenario. We went to court and, of course, won the case. The man turned out to be insolvent.

INTERVIEWER

Well, could we go back to that list and take one of the painters—Hieronymus Bosch, for instance? The nightmare symbolic quality of his work seems so far removed from your own.

HEMINGWAY

I have the nightmares and know about the ones other people have. But you do not have to write them down. Anything you can omit that you know you still have in the writing and its quality will show. When a writer omits things he does not know, they show like holes in his writing.

INTERVIEWER

Does that mean that a close knowledge of the works of the people on your list helps fill the "well" you were speaking of a while back. Or were they consciously a help in developing the techniques of writing?

HEMINGWAY

They were a part of learning to see, to hear, to think, to feel and not feel, and to write. The well is where your "juice" is. Nobody knows what it is made of, least of all yourself. What you know is if you have it, or you have to wait for it to come back.

INTERVIEWER

Would you admit to there being symbolism in your novels?

HEMINGWAY

I suppose there are symbols since critics keep finding them. If you do not mind I dislike talking about them and being questioned about them. It is hard enough to write books and stories without being asked to explain them as well. Also it deprives the explainers of work. If five or six or more good explainers can keep going why should I interfere with them? Read anything I write for the pleasure of reading it. Whatever else you find will be the measure of what you brought to the reading.

INTERVIEWER

Continuing with just one question on this line: One of the advisory staff editors wonders about a parallel he feels he's found in *The Sun Also Rises* between the dramatis personae of the bull ring and the characters of the novel itself. He points out that the first sentence of the book tells us Robert Cohn is a boxer; later, during the desencajonada, the bull is described as using his horns like a boxer, hooking and jabbing. And just as the bull is attracted and pacified by the presence of a steer, Robert Cohn defers to Jake who is emasculated precisely as is a steer. He sees Mike as the picador, baiting Cohn repeatedly. The editor's thesis goes on, but he wondered if it was your conscious intention to inform the novel with the tragic structure of the bullfight ritual.

HEMINGWAY

It sounds as though the advisory staff editor was a little bit screwy. Who ever said Jake was "emasculated precisely as is a

steer?" Actually he had been wounded in quite a different way and his testicles were intact and not damaged. Thus he was capable of all normal feelings as a *man* but incapable of consummating them. The important distinction is that his wound was physical and not psychological and that he was not emasculated.

INTERVIEWER

These questions which inquire into craftsmanship really are an annoyance.

HEMINGWAY

A sensible question is neither a delight nor an annoyance. I still believe though that it is very bad for a writer to talk about how he writes. He writes to be read by the eye and no explanations nor dissertations should be necessary. You can be sure that there is much more there than will be read at any first reading and having made this it is not the writer's province to explain it or to run guided tours through the more difficult country of his work.

INTERVIEWER

In connection with this, I remember you have also warned that it is dangerous for a writer to talk about a work-in-progress, that he can "talk it out" so to speak. Why should this be so? I only ask because there are so many writers—Twain, Wilde, Thurber, Steffens come to mind—who would seem to have polished their material by testing it on listeners.

HEMINGWAY

I cannot believe Twain ever "tested out" *Huckleberry Finn* on listeners. If he did they probably had him cut out good things and put in the bad parts. Wilde was said by people who knew him to have been a better talker than a writer. Steffens talked better than he wrote. Both his writing and his talking were sometimes hard to believe, and I heard many stories change as he grew older. If Thurber can talk as well as he writes he must be one of the greatest and least boring talkers.

The man I know who talks best about his own trade and has the pleasantest and most wicked tongue is Juan Belmonte, the matador.

INTERVIEWER

Could you say how much thought-out effort went into the evolvement of your distinctive style?

HEMINGWAY

That is a long-term tiring question and if you spent a couple of days answering it you would be so self-conscious that you could not write. I might say that what amateurs call a style is usually only the unavoidable awkwardnesses in first trying to make something that has not heretofore been made. Almost no new classics resemble other previous classics. At first people can see only the awkwardness. Then they are not so perceptible. When they show so very awkwardly people think these awkwardnesses are the style and many copy them. This is regrettable.

INTERVIEWER

You once wrote me that the simple circumstances under which various pieces of fiction were written could be instructive. Could you apply this to *The Killers*—you said that you had written it, *Ten Indians* and *Today is Friday* in one day—and perhaps to your first novel *The Sun Also Rises*?

HEMINGWAY

Let's see. *The Sun Also Rises* I started in Valencia on my birthday, July 21st. Hadley, my wife, and I had gone to Valencia early to get good tickets for the Feria there which started the 24th of July. Everybody my age had written a novel and I was still having a difficult time writing a paragraph. So I started the book on my birthday, wrote all through the Feria, in bed in the morning, went on to Madrid and wrote there. There was no Feria there, so we had a room with a table and I wrote in great luxury on the table and around the corner from the hotel in a beer place in the Pasaje

Alvarez where it was cool. It finally got too hot to write and we went to Hendaye. There was a small cheap hotel there on the big long lovely beach and I worked very well there and then went up to Paris and finished the first draft in the apartment over the sawmill at 113 rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs six weeks from the day I started it. I showed the first draft to Nathan Asch, the novelist, who then had quite a strong accent and he said "Hem, vaht do you mean saying you wrote a novel? A novel huh. Hem you are riding a travhel büch." I was not too discouraged by Nathan and rewrote the book, keeping in the travel (that was the part about the fishing trip and Pamplona) at Schruns in the Vorarlberg at the Hotel Taube.

The stories you mention I wrote in one day in Madrid on May 16 when it snowed out the San Isidro bullfights. First I wrote *The Killers* which I'd tried to write before and failed. Then after lunch I got in bed to keep warm and wrote *Today is Friday*. I had so much juice I thought maybe I was going crazy and I had about six other stories to write. So I got dressed and walked to Fornos, the old bull fighter's cafe, and drank coffee and then came back and wrote *Ten Indians*. This made me very sad and I drank some brandy and went to sleep. I'd forgotten to eat and one of the waiters brought me up some Bacalao and a small steak and fried potatoes and a bottle of Valdepeñas.

The woman who ran the Pension was always worried that I did not eat enough and she had sent the waiter. I remember sitting up in bed and eating, and drinking the Valdepeñas. The waiter said he would bring up another bottle. He said the Señora wanted to know if I was going to write all night. I said no, I thought I would lay off for a while. Why don't you try to write just one more, the waiter asked. I'm only supposed to write one, I said. Nonsense, he said. You could write six. I'll try tomorrow, I said. Try it tonight, he said. What do you think the old woman sent the food up for?

I'm tired, I told him. Nonsense, he said (the word was not nonsense). You tired after three miserable little stories. Translate me one.

Leave me alone, I said. How am I going to write it if you don't leave me alone. So I sat up in bed and drank the Val-depeñas and thought what a hell of a writer I was if the first story was as good as I'd hoped.

INTERVIEWER

How complete in your own mind is the conception of a short story? Does the theme, or the plot, or a character change as you go along?

HEMINGWAY

Sometimes you know the story. Sometimes you make it up as you go along and have no idea how it will come out. Everything changes as it moves. That is what makes the movement which makes the story. Sometimes the movement is so slow it does not seem to be moving. But there is always change and always movement.

INTERVIEWER

Is it the same with the novel, or do you work out the whole plan before you start and adhere to it rigorously?

HEMINGWAY

For Whom The Bell Tolls was a problem which I carried on each day. I knew what was going to happen in principle. But I invented what happened each day I wrote.

INTERVIEWER

Were the *Green Hills of Africa*, *To Have and Have Not*, and *Across the River and Into The Trees* all started as short stories and developed into novels? If so, are the two forms so similar that the writer can pass from one to the other without completely revamping his approach?

HEMINGWAY

No, that is not true. The *Green Hills of Africa* is not a novel but was written in an attempt to write an absolutely true book

to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action could, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination. After I had written it I wrote two short stories, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*. These were stories which I invented from the knowledge and experience acquired on the same long hunting trip one month of which I had tried to write a truthful account of in *The Green Hills. To Have and Have Not* and *Across the River and Into the Trees* were both started as short stories.

INTERVIEWER

Do you find it easy to shift from one literary project to another or do you continue through to finish what you start?

HEMINGWAY

The fact that I am interrupting serious work to answer these questions proves that I am so stupid that I should be penalized severely. I will be. Don't worry.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think of yourself in competition with other writers?

HEMINGWAY

Never. I used to try to write better than certain dead writers of whose value I was certain. For a long time now I have tried simply to write the best I can. Sometimes I have good luck and write better than I can.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think a writer's power diminishes as he grows older? In the *Green Hills of Africa* you mention that American writers at a certain age change into Old Mother Hubbards.

HEMINGWAY

I don't know about that. People who know what they are doing should last as long their heads last. In that book you

mention, if you look it up, you'll see I was sounding off about American literature with a humorless Austrian character who was forcing me to talk when I wanted to do something else. I wrote an accurate account of the conversation. Not to make deathless pronouncements. A fair percent of the pronouncements are good enough.

INTERVIEWER

We've not discussed character. Are the characters of your work taken without exception from real life?

HEMINGWAY

Of course they are not. *Some* come from real life. Mostly you invent people from a knowledge and understanding and experience of people.

INTERVIEWER

Could you say something about the process of turning a real-life character into a fictional one?

HEMINGWAY

If I explained how that is sometimes done, it would be a handbook for libel lawyers.

INTERVIEWER

Do you make a distinction—as E. M. Forster does—between “flat” and “round” characters?

HEMINGWAY

If you describe someone, it is flat, as a photograph is, and from my standpoint a failure. If you make him up from what you know, there should be all the dimensions.

INTERVIEWER

Which of your characters do you look back on with particular affection?

HEMINGWAY

That would make too long a list.

INTERVIEWER

Then you enjoy reading over your own books—without feeling there are changes you would like to make?

HEMINGWAY

I read them sometimes to cheer me up when it is hard to write and then I remember that it was always difficult and how nearly impossible it was sometimes.

INTERVIEWER

How do you name your characters?

HEMINGWAY

The best I can.

INTERVIEWER

Do the titles come to you while you're in the process of doing the story?

HEMINGWAY

No. I make a list of titles *after* I've finished the story or the book —sometimes as many as 100. Then I start eliminating them, sometimes all of them.

INTERVIEWER

And you do this even with a story whose title is supplied from the text—*Hills Like White Elephants*, for example?

HEMINGWAY

Yes. The title comes afterwards. I met a girl in Prunier where I'd gone to eat oysters before lunch. I knew she'd had an abortion. I went over and we talked, not about that, but on the way home I thought of the story, skipped lunch, and spent that afternoon writing it.

INTERVIEWER

So when you're not writing, you remain constantly the observer, looking for something which can be of use.

HEMINGWAY

Surely. If a writer stops observing he is finished. But he does not have to observe consciously nor think how it will be useful. Perhaps that would be true at the beginning. But later everything he sees goes into the great reserve of things he knows or has seen. If it is any use to know it, I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show. If a writer omits something because he does not know it then there is a hole in the story.

The Old Man and the Sea could have been over a thousand pages long and had every character in the village in it and all the processes of how they made their living, were born, educated, bore children, etc. That is done excellently and well by other writers. In writing you are limited by what has already been done satisfactorily. So I have tried to learn to do something else. First I have tried to eliminate everything unnecessary to conveying experience to the reader so that after he or she has read something it will become a part of his or her experience and seem actually to have happened. This is very hard to do and I've worked at it very hard.

Anyway, to skip how it is done, I had unbelievable luck this time and could convey the experience completely and have it be one that no one had ever conveyed. The luck was that I had a good man and a good boy and lately writers have forgotten there still are such things. Then the ocean is worth writing about just as man is. So I was lucky there. I've seen the marlin mate and know about that. So I leave that out. I've seen a school (or pod) of more than fifty sperm whales in that same stretch of water and once harpooned one nearly sixty feet in length and lost him. So I left that out. All the stories I know from the fishing village I leave out. But the knowledge is what makes the underwater part of the iceberg.

INTERVIEWER

Archibald MacLeish has spoken of a technical device you discovered which would seem to do with conveying experience to a reader. He said you developed it while covering baseball games back in those *Kansas City Star* days. It was simply that a writer should concentrate during moments of apparent inactivity—that what he described of those moments had an effect, and a powerful one, of making the reader conscious of what he had been aware of only subconsciously...

HEMINGWAY

The anecdote is apocryphal. I never wrote baseball for the *Star*. What Archie was trying to remember was how I was trying to learn in Chicago in around 1920 and was searching for the unnoticed things that made emotions such as the way an outfielder tossed his glove without looking back to where it fell, the squeak of resin on canvas under a fighter's flat-soled gym-shoes, the gray colour of Jack Blackburn's skin when he had just come out of stir and other things I noted as a painter sketches. You saw Blackburn's strange colour and the old razor cuts and the way he spun a man before you knew his history. These were the things which moved you before you knew the story.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever described any type of situation of which you had no personal knowledge?

HEMINGWAY

That is a strange question. By personal knowledge do you mean carnal knowledge? In that case the answer is positive. A writer, if he is any good, does not describe. He invents or *makes* out of knowledge personal and impersonal and sometimes he seems to have unexplained knowledge which could come from forgotten racial or family experience. Who teaches the homing pigeon to fly as he does; where does a fighting bull get his bravery, or a hunting-dog his nose? This

is an elaboration or a condensation on that stuff we were talking in Madrid that time when my head was not to be trusted.

INTERVIEWER

How detached must you be from an experience before you can write about it in fictional terms? The African air-crashes, for instance?

HEMINGWAY

It depends on the experience. One part of you sees it with complete detachment from the start. Another part is very involved. I think there is no rule about how soon one should write about it. It would depend on how well adjusted the individual was and on his or her recuperative powers. Certainly it is valuable to a trained writer to crash in an aircraft which burns. He learns several important things very quickly. Whether they will be of use to him is conditioned by survival. Survival, with honor, that outmoded and all-important word, is as difficult as ever and as all important to a writer. Those who do not last are always more beloved since no one has to see them in their long, dull, unrelenting, no quarter given and no quarter received, fights that they make to do something as they believe it should be done before they die. Those who die or quit early and easy and with every good reason are preferred because they are understandable and human. Failure and well-disguised cowardice are more human and more beloved.

INTERVIEWER

Could I ask you to what extent you think the writer should concern himself with the socio-political problems of his times?

HEMINGWAY

Everyone has his own conscience and there should be no rules about how a conscience should function. All you can be

sure about in a political-minded writer is that if his work should last you will have to skip the politics when you read it. Many of the so-called politically enlisted writers change their politics frequently. This is very exciting to them and to their political-literary reviews. Sometimes they even have to rewrite their view-points... and in a hurry. Perhaps it can be respected as a form of the pursuit of happiness.

INTERVIEWER

Has the political influence of Ezra Pound on the segregationist Kasper had any effect on your belief that the poet ought to be released from St. Elizabeth's Hospital.*

HEMINGWAY

No. None at all. I believe Ezra should be released and allowed to write poetry in Italy on an undertaking by him to abstain from any politics. I would be happy to see Kasper jailed as soon as possible. Great poets are not necessarily girl guides nor scoutmasters nor splendid influences on youth. To name a few: Verlaine, Rimbaud, Shelley, Byron, Baudelaire, Proust, Gide should not have been confined to prevent them from being aped in their thinking, their manners or their morals by local Kaspers. I am sure that it will take a footnote to this paragraph in ten years to explain who Kasper was.

INTERVIEWER

Would you say, ever, that there is any didactic intention in your work?

HEMINGWAY

Didactic is a word that has been misused and has spoiled. *Death in the Afternoon* is an instructive book.

INTERVIEWER

It has been said that a writer only deals with one or two

*As this issue went to press a Federal Court in Washington, D.C. dismissed all charges against Pound, clearing the way for his release from St. Elizabeth's.

HEMINGWAY

ideas throughout his work. Would you say your work reflects one or two ideas.

Who said that? It sounds much too simple. The man who said it possibly *had* only one or two ideas.

INTERVIEWER

Well, perhaps it would be better put this way: Graham Greene said in one of these interviews that a ruling passion gives to a shelf of novels the unity of a system. You yourself have said, I believe, that great writing comes out of a sense of injustice. Do you consider it important that a novelist be dominated in this way—by some such compelling sense?

HEMINGWAY

Mr. Greene has a facility for making statements that I do not possess. It would be impossible for me to make generalizations about a shelf of novels or a wisp of snipe or a gaggle of geese. I'll try a generalization though. A writer without a sense of justice and of injustice would be better off editing the Year Book of a school for exceptional children than writing novels. Another generalization. You see; they are not so difficult when they are sufficiently obvious. The most essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shock-proof, shit detector. This is the writer's radar and all great writers have had it.

INTERVIEWER

Finally, a fundamental question: namely, as a creative writer what do you think is the function of your art? Why a representation of fact, rather than fact itself.

HEMINGWAY

Why be puzzled by that? From things that have happened and from things as they exist and from all things that you know and all those you cannot know, you make something through your invention that is not a representation but a

whole new thing truer than anything true and alive, and you make it alive, and if you make it well enough, you give it immortality. That is why you write and for no other reason that you know of. But what about all the reasons that no one knows?

—GEORGE PLIMPTON

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(This is the twenty-first in a series on the Art of Fiction. Authors interviewed have included E. M. Forster, François Mauriac, Graham Greene, William Styron, Irwin Shaw, Alberto Moravia, Joyce Cary, Ralph Ellison, Georges Simenon, James Thurber, Nelson Algren, William Faulkner, Dorothy Parker, Isak Dinesen, Thornton Wilder, Truman Capote, Françoise Sagan, Robert Penn Warren, Frank O'Connor and Angus Wilson. Many of the interviews done to date have been collected in book form under the title Writers At Work, published by the Viking Press and with an introduction by Malcolm Cowley.)

TWO POEMS

BY W. S. MERWIN

AUNT ALMA

This is the one that will outlive us all
With her head in the same duster and her small
Mouth maybe puckering in a bit more
Each decade, but it always did gather
Shut, that way, with a drawstring. Only her
Glasses, I think, may thicken some; that odor
Of naphtha and laundry, that look and color
Of saved pumpkin shrunk in the dark, were there
Twenty-five years ago when she appeared
Over the railing of Ruth's cradle and
Made the baby scream. Nothing has escaped
That stub and orange hand since it was little
And could snatch rats out of the cellar wall
To soak in gas and light them with a match
As she let go, laughing for fear the fields catch,
Up the river, when they were children. It still
Possesses three pennies of the first nickel
Husband Spence ever made, and cleans and keeps
Things covered but never uses, while the world
Wastes, plots and is outwitted, rots and never
Knows who might be watching even the preachers
On their pedestals. Nor nothing ever got faded
By the daylight in a house of hers. Only
The eye of God ever got past the drawn
Blinds and belted drapes at her locked windows,

To where she sits now on a loose cover
While Spence nods in his hat, and her brother
The snuffling preacher and she writhe together
With the wrestlers on the jigging screen, smack
Fists in palms and cry for blood. Unto her
Dark at last all our things will be added,
We never doubted. One after the other
She will watch us go, and no one will see
Her sidle up to each of us where he lies,
See her bend down over us, blinking behind
Her mullioned lenses, nor catch the rat-quick hand
Reaching to snatch the pennies from our eyes.



NOTHING NEW

You were always a stray and grating
Stiff-necked lot, I am sure of it; graceless,
And nothing loose about your hands.

Great ones at vanishing, some all the time,
Bearing little but grudges; though some
Relieved by violence; each one lost in the end

Without maps, in the niggard unlovely
Waste he had found for himself, sick of it,
Wondering where else there was to go.

The promising one that just up and left,
Whom they located years later, the Old Man by then
Of a far mountain, still giving no reasons.

Jake, who told little, and was murdered one night
Fetching home some coffee in a pillowcase,
And no one could say why the man hated him.

Scary John D., the clean drunk river-man
With delicate fingers, who had nine lives elsewhere,
And the scheming drone he bred to abhor him,

You were unrewarding always, deaf and restless,
And I resisted but tumbled early
To the old testament of your blood.

Elijah did not need the ventriloquy
Of dry bones, to come, in his cave, simply
To this; I am no better than my fathers.

But I can understand why, for Isaiah,
There had to be the posts of the door moving
And the house filled with smoke, before he could see

That more than desperation called him, and could cry
To the ungracious ears of their crusty
Iniquity that it would be comforted.

TO L., ASLEEP

The movement of my body when I wake,
Hinge of my arm, the shift of hand and throat,
Reminds me there was something for your sake
I meant to do, something I have forgot.
Yet, rising from your dark to know me still,
You take too long to tell me what it was,
Labor that I alone could not fulfill.
Meanwhile I see the morning mold your face.

Whatever labor it was I could not keep
In mind remains inside your dream, unborn,
Soundlessly chuckling like a child asleep
Who cannot cry, who cannot even speak.
Yet I will know it as I know the turn,
The movement of your body when I wake.

—JAMES WRIGHT



GORDON WOODWARD

THE NIGHT DRIVERS

THERE was no warning. He had a sudden brief awareness of movement somewhere along the street behind him, and he turned his head and looked back the way he had come; and then they were upon him.

It was late. He had caught the last bus up from town, and when he alighted at the corner he had hesitated a moment, watching the bus as it whirled on up the avenue trailing twin jointless arms along the glinting copper arteries overhead; then he had turned and started down the quiet side street.

He had been walking slowly; for there was something in the cumulative effect of the darkness and the lights of the houses sprawling far back from the street in deep pools of shadow and the slaty rattle of leaves overhead which had given him a sense of well-being, an almost omniscient feeling of detachment, and as he walked along he had been trying to recapture in his mind a passage from the Mozart Quintet he had heard that evening.

Then he had come to the corner and had started across the intersection and was just stepping up on to the grass-covered and tree-lined island running down the centre of the street when some impulse had caused him to turn his head; so that he had caught just a glimpse of them coming and then they were already roaring past.

There were three cars. The first was a black sedan with the headlights unlit and two low-set foglights throwing amber splotches of light along the pavement. It slewed around the end of the island, accelerating, and he felt a quick rush of engine-hot fumes against his cheek; then it sped on up the left-hand side of the street pursued by a small blue roadster which screeched around the corner inches from the curb and raced after it.

He stood perfectly still, feeling a sense of utter bewilderment mingled with the first soft tinge of fear; and yet he continued to follow them with his eyes as they raced up the street jammed hub-to-hub between the island and the sidewalk, the gleaming tail lights drawing away from him like hot live coals. Then he heard a slight rattle behind him and he turned his head quickly just as a grey sedan shot out into the glare of the streetlight and made a wide sweeping circle of the intersection, tires wrenching and squealing against the pavement; then it swerved suddenly and raced down the street in the opposite direction to that taken by the other cars, hugging the island close, tail lights appearing to wink back at him through the darkness.

Somewhere behind him the roar of the other cars was growing louder again and he knew that they had swung around and were returning; he started backing up from the curb, not turning his head or taking his eyes from the hot-red sparks fleeing into the darkness before him, backing slowly towards the centre of the island until his back slammed up against a tree, and he reached behind him and gripped the trunk as though the ground had suddenly begun rocking beneath him.

The grey sedan made a wild skidding turn around the intersection a block down the street; he heard the wrenching squeal of tires and saw the headlight-beams flicking crazily over the hedges and trees as it swung around. Then the roar of the other cars was close behind him, drumming in his ears, and he glanced over his shoulder and saw them racing down the street one behind the other.

The blue roadster was leading, and all at once it swerved to one side and jumped the curb of the island and went bouncing across the grass behind him, barely missing the tree against which he was standing, ploughing through a tangle of snapping low-hanging branches and then dropping back on to the pavement on the other side where it accelerated quickly, tires giving one quick hot wrench and leaving a faint odor of burnt rubber hovering in the air; then it sped up the side street and out of sight.

But the black sedan still came on, not slowing, shooting

out into the glare of the streetlight and cutting diagonally across the intersection; and as it passed him he caught a glimpse of two pale young faces behind the windshield, staring straight before them and showing neither fear nor exhilaration but only a sort of blank and emotionless wonder at finding themselves there, as though they felt that they couldn't stop anything, and if living in terms of going seemed directionless, then they still had to keep going with it regardless until something broke or dropped off or perhaps blew up in their faces like a hot light bulb.

He still watched the black sedan after it had swept past him, following it with his eyes as it swerved slightly and went hurtling down the same side of the street up which the grey sedan was approaching with headlights dazzling; and then he was suddenly convinced that they were going to meet head-on and involuntarily he held his breath, waiting for the crash, his body tensed and rigid as though something of himself was in the speeding automobiles.

Because he knew that somewhere it had to end; there had to be some point at which all the hurtling power would cease to flow and come to an abrupt impasse with a grinding crash of hot-searing metal, and then there would be only the brittle tink-tink of falling glass and then even that would cease and melt into the stillness.

But they did pass. He heard them swoosh past one another with a sort of hollow sucking noise and he felt a sudden flood of relief sweep over him; then the tail lights of the black sedan were fast-diminishing like bright wind-blown sparks while the grey sedan came speeding on, swerving neither to left or right, but speeding across the intersection straight towards him. He wanted to shout. He opened his mouth but the words clogged somewhere, so that he remained soundless yet with his mouth still open. He closed his eyes and gripped the tree trunk and waited for it to happen.

Somewhere in the distance he could hear the wrenching squeal of tires gripping the pavement on a turn; but he kept waiting for the impact, standing with his body erect and upright against the tree while the searing light penetrated his eyelids. Then he heard the grey sedan swerve sharply and he

caught the hot smell of oil and metal and scorched rubber and felt the lights swing away from his face; he stood perfectly still, listening to the clashing of gears going away from him somewhere to the rear. He felt suddenly weak and dizzy.

Slowly he became aware that the night seemed full of roaring exhaust-jets and the hot tortured kiss of rubber tires, as though some hidden power had suddenly erupted on the surface of his vision and hearing like a viscid sore. Then it occurred to him that someone else might have heard the sound of the cars. He had no idea how long it had been since they had first swooped down on him, but he felt that somewhere in the whole dark sprawling city there must be one person who had heard the noise. He looked quickly up and down the street, but all he could see were the vague outlines of dark silent homes; then far down the street he noticed a single bulb hanging in an archway like a pale-hot melon and he thought someone was coming, but he realized in almost the same instant that it had been there in the beginning and was only a part of the darkness and meant nothing. His head slumped forward a little and he became aware that he was almost trembling; then he noticed that the cars were no longer moving.

The black sedan and the blue roadster had pulled up one behind the other on the square in front of him, motors idling quietly, now and then giving a brief convulsive shudder like the accumulated shivers which suddenly wrench an animal's body and then leave it quiet again, bright tail lights blurred and misty through the wraiths of exhaust. He turned his head slightly and saw the grey sedan parked close to the curb of the island a few yards up the street behind him, bright headlights tunneling down the dark street ahead and lighting up the tree trunks on either side like enormous pickets; and still no one moved or got out of the cars or even spoke loud enough for him to hear.

He still stood with his back to the trunk of the tree, although there had been a moment when the grey sedan swerving aside had snapped some inner tension within him and flooded his whole being with a momentary sense of relief so that he had dropped his hands to his sides.

Then all at once the doors of the black sedan swung open and two boys got out, one of them allowing the door to swing forward so that it caught gleaming reflections from the street light; then a boy got out of the blue roadster and stood by the running board with one hand resting on top of the open door; and none of them spoke or moved or even appeared to look at one another, standing there unmoving in part-shadow and part-glare of the streetlight as though listening or trying to come to some decision about something, the only sound the steady pant of the engines and the sudden crunching of grit on the pavement as a foot was shifted slightly.

All at once the boy who had been driving the black sedan turned around and slammed the door hard. The other door slammed. The door of the blue roadster was slammed shut and sprang back and was snatched in mid-swing and reslammed so that it shut and stayed. They came across the square.

He watched them approach; the whole movement of their bodies showing no desire to walk either slowly or quickly, advancing towards him with a sort of calm detachment as though everything that was happening had been repeated so often that it had become almost routine, a fixed method of using up the sweet-warm sap of living without purpose, like a small clockwork toy fretting and whirring itself into a state of impotence against the smooth varnished leg of a chair. He glanced behind him to see if anyone was coming towards him from the grey sedan, but no one got out and the sedan was as it had been with the headlights on and the motor idling with the same rhythmical squeaking sound, so he turned his head to the front again. Then the three boys stepped up over the curb and stopped a few paces in front of him.

He waited for them to speak, suddenly conscious of the sameness of their appearance, not merely an outward sameness because their clothing was different, but some indefinable quality which stamped them as belonging to the same group in interests or intelligence or perhaps degree of bewilderment, as though their appearance were the reflection of a disciplined unconformity which had been nurtured not by a common aim, but by a common defense against something.

And still he waited, watching their faces closely, sensing that there was something for which they were groping.

Then all at once the tallest boy moved his feet slightly, shifting them without moving away from the others. "Something wrong, Mister?" he said.

"Wrong?" He didn't move, still holding himself erect and upright against the tree with his arms hanging to his side and his eyes searching the faces before him, trying to establish some contact with what it was they were feeling or thinking, yet finding nothing. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"You were watching us," the boy said. "You've been standing there watching us for quite a while. Maybe you don't like the way we do things."

"I didn't say anything of the kind."

"Then why have you been standing there watching us?"

"Now look here!" he said with sudden impatience. "This is ridiculous... you know as well as I do that the reason I stopped here was because you wouldn't let me pass..."

"Who wouldn't?"

"All of you. You were racing around me. What did you expect me to do... walk right out into the middle of the road and...?" His voice trailed off, the unuttered words suspended somewhere between mind and tongue; because he had suddenly become aware that they were not even listening to him and that his words were not penetrating but were being deflected like bright pebbles bouncing from the surface of a glass dome. It was like a game: they were baiting him, trying to get him to call them names or threaten them, anything with which to justify their actions to themselves so that they might be allowed to do violence in the name of revenge. An almost intolerable sadness swept over him at the thought of it. "I was just walking down the street," he said, "and then you all kept racing back and forth and I couldn't go on. There's been a misunderstanding... that's all."

"Then go on," the boy said. "Why don't you go now?"

"Why?"

"There's no one stopping you, is there? Why don't you keep going?"

He could feel them watching him, waiting; and yet still he didn't answer. Somewhere in the distance a dog barked, then was silent. He turned his head and looked at the strip of black asphalt road which he would have to cross to reach the far curb, then glanced at the grey sedan parked against the cement curbing of the island a few yards up the street with its engine still idling; and he knew that he would not under any circumstances attempt to cross that strip of asphalt. He shook his head. "No," he said.

"You wanted to go," the boy said.

"No," he said. "I... I'm not feeling too well. I'll rest a few minutes."

They were still watching him, standing side by side before him in that slightly-baffled and uncomprehending attitude of being motionless as though they were actors performing in some weird drama being staged there in the glare of the streetlight and something had caused the action to suddenly shift away from them so that all they could do was keep repeating the same lines over and over again in the hope that someone would do something or say something to bring them back; and all at once he felt a tremendous need to reach them in some way and he stepped forward and extended his hand. "Not this," he said. "There is something... believe me, there is. But not this."

They stepped back quickly as though the motion of his hand had caused a wind which had uprooted them; and as they moved the light fell full upon them and he saw for the first time how fine and almost beautiful were the features of their pale young faces.

It was then he noticed that the one in the centre was very young, not more than twelve or thirteen years old, standing quietly between the others and staring straight to the front with eyes like moist black buttons imbedded in the wax-like skin of his face, and then all at once he dropped his gaze to the ground in front of him and thrust his hands in his pockets and stood motionless again. None of them moved or even appeared to breathe.

He moved slightly so that his back was against the tree again, still watching the figures before him and waiting for

something to happen. He could hear the leaves again, clattering a little in the stillness like thin chips of slate; and somewhere behind him he could hear the soft regular squeak of the grey sedan.

Then all at once the boy who had done the talking turned his head and murmured something to the others in a low voice and they all turned without hesitation and walked back across the square.

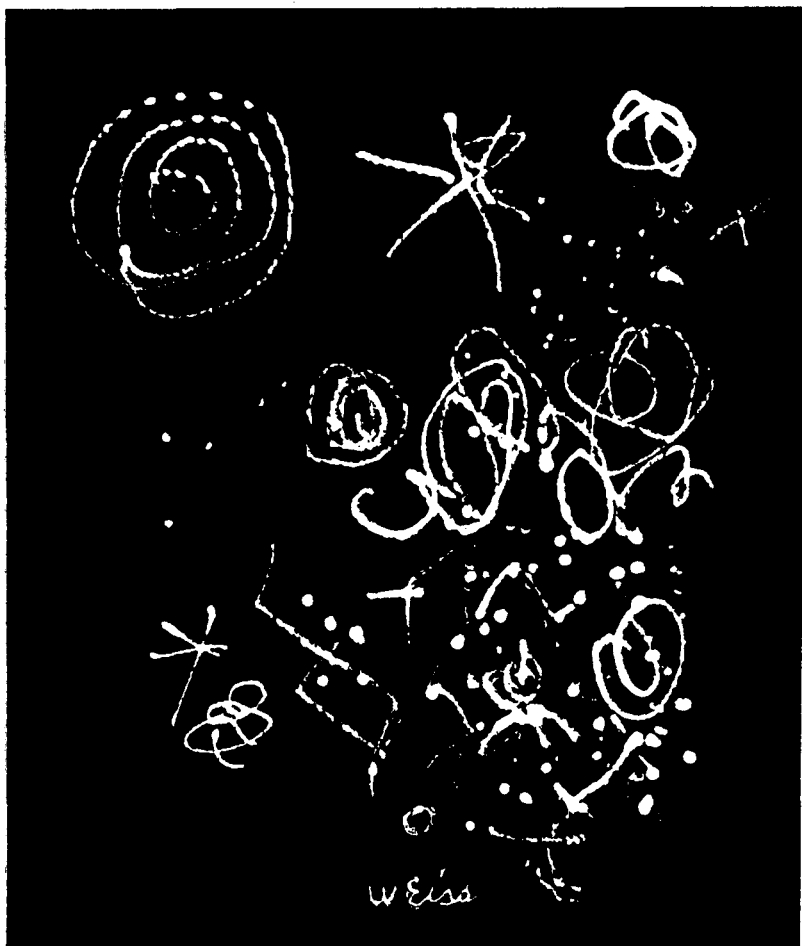
He watched them climb back into the cars, and there was a brief moment when the air seemed to be filled with the sound of hard-slamming doors; then the black sedan started off with a grinding clash of gears and sped up the dark side street with the blue roadster following; the grey sedan suddenly roared into motion and swerved around the end of the island with tires screeching and raced after them. He watched them fleeing from him down the narrow street, the bright headlights flaring up the trees on either side of them as though they were speeding into a long leafy tunnel; then there were only the tail lights staring back at him like bright crimson eyes and then they, too, had faded and were gone.

He tilted his head back a little so that it rested against the tree trunk and he was looking up into the dark night-sky; then he tried to bring some sort of order to the chaos which was in his mind, striving to restore his thoughts to where they had been before it all happened, and yet somehow the pale young faces of the boys remained as a vivid image.

He stepped away from the tree and hesitated a moment, standing perfectly still with his gaze fixed on the sweeping semi-circle of the white cement curbing before him; then suddenly he turned around quickly and placed his forearm against the tree trunk and bowed his head, blinking back a rush of tears. "The whole thing means nothing," he murmured. "It was an isolated incident... a misunderstanding... it means nothing..." For a moment he was silent; then he said it again, and again. Finally he closed his eyes and stood perfectly still, listening to the whispering rustle of the leaves around him while the night-cool scent of roses and mignonette and fresh-cut grass drifted down to him across the

stone patios and shadow-clotted flowerbeds and deserted moonlit lawns of the many dark-silent homes up and down the street. "It means nothing," he said, "nothing... nothing..."

Still repeating it to himself when from somewhere in the distance came the thin impotent wailing of a siren floating towards him like a bright crimson thread through the night and the darkness...



THREE POEMS

BY CHARLES TOMLINSON

DISTINCTIONS

The seascape shifts

Between the minutest interstices of time
Blue is blue.

A pine-branch
Tugs at the eye: the eye
Returns to grey-blue, blue-black or indigo
Or it returns, simply,
To blue-after-the-pine-branch.

Here, there is no question of aberrations
Into pinks, golds or mauves:
This is the variation Pater indicated
But failed to prove.

Art exists at a remove
Evocation, at two,
Discusses a blue that someone
Heard someone talking about.

GLI SCAFARI

Rock reproduces rock
In miniature
On rock; and where
The sheerness fails
Particularity resumes:
Layers, in flakes;

Piled shale; or
Minutest slates
Not slatted—packed and pitted
Against each
Barbarous element,
For all four
Climb with this sea
Save fire (and fire
Galls from above)
To will a corrosion
In so much silent decision among
Toy fortresses
Which can resist.

FIRE IN A DARK LANDSCAPE

And where it falls, a quality
Not of the night, but of the mind
As when, on the moonlit roofs,
A counterfeit snow
Whitely deceives us. And yet ...
It is the meeting, of light
With dark, challenges the memory
To reveal itself, in an unfamiliar form,
As here: red branches
Into a transparency
In liquid motion, the wind's
Chimera of silk, twisting
Thickened with amber shadows,
A quality, not of the mind
But of fire on darkness.

REQUIEM

Mother is gone. Bird songs wouldn't let her breathe.
The skating bug broke through the eternal veil.
A tree in the forest fell; the air remembered.
Two rocks clinked in the night to signal some meaning.

Traveler north, beyond where you can return,
hearing above you the last of the razor birds whizz
over the drift of dust that bore your name,
there's a kind of waiting you teach us—the art of not
knowing.

Suicidal gestures of nobility driven to the wrist,
our molten bodies remembering some easier form,
we feel the bones assert the rites of yesterday
and the flow of angular events becoming destiny.

Summer and locusts own the elm part of town;
on the millpond moss is making its cream.
Our duty is just a certain high kind of waiting;
beyond our hearing is the hearing of the community.

—WILLIAM STAFFORD

CHINESE BOXES

I hoped to find under my skin
A lump embodying that which
Powers my words invisibly—
In guts, in the devious sap
Of hormones, in grey medulla—
But failed. Therefore I trick open
That box with which we're provided
And prize out, by main force of will:
A three-ribbed smoking prime roast beef;
Inside this, pillowed, a woman
Stripped full to the hair of her shame;
In this, sound six-percenting bonds,
Compounding, self-reproductive;
In this, butlers for indolence,
'Not in, he won't be in'; and boxed
In this, bound in stamped calf, my words,
Volumes gilded with my name: me.
Visibly I grope for that which hides
In my innermost words. Must hide.
Why else, box within box, bound gilt
To my volunteering mind, this
Indolent six-percent stripped rib?

—GEORGE P. ELLIOTT



Self-Portrait

Alberto Giacometti,

ON the tenth of October, 1901, Alberto Giacometti was born in Stampa, Switzerland, the son of Giovanni Giacometti, one of the foremost Swiss impressionist painters. Stampa is a very small place surrounded by high mountains. In such a landscape the diminutiveness of man in relation to nature becomes emphatic in the extreme. A human figure appears precarious and incomprehensible. At a very early age Giacometti began to draw and paint under the guidance of his father. When he was 18, he went to the School of Fine Arts where he remained only three days before transferring to the School of Arts and Crafts.

After passing two years in Italy, Giacometti arrived in Paris in the early twenties and studied sculpture at Bourdelle's studio and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Of his work then, he has said :

"It became impossible to grasp the totality of a figure. We were much too near the model and if one started from any detail, from a heel or a nose, there was no hope of achieving the ensemble. But if, on the other hand, one began by analyzing the detail, the end of the nose for example, one was lost. One might have spent an entire lifetime without achieving any result. The form decomposed itself, became like specks in motion across a black deep emptiness. The distance between one side of the nose and the other became like the Sahara, limitless, without any fixed point, everything escaping".

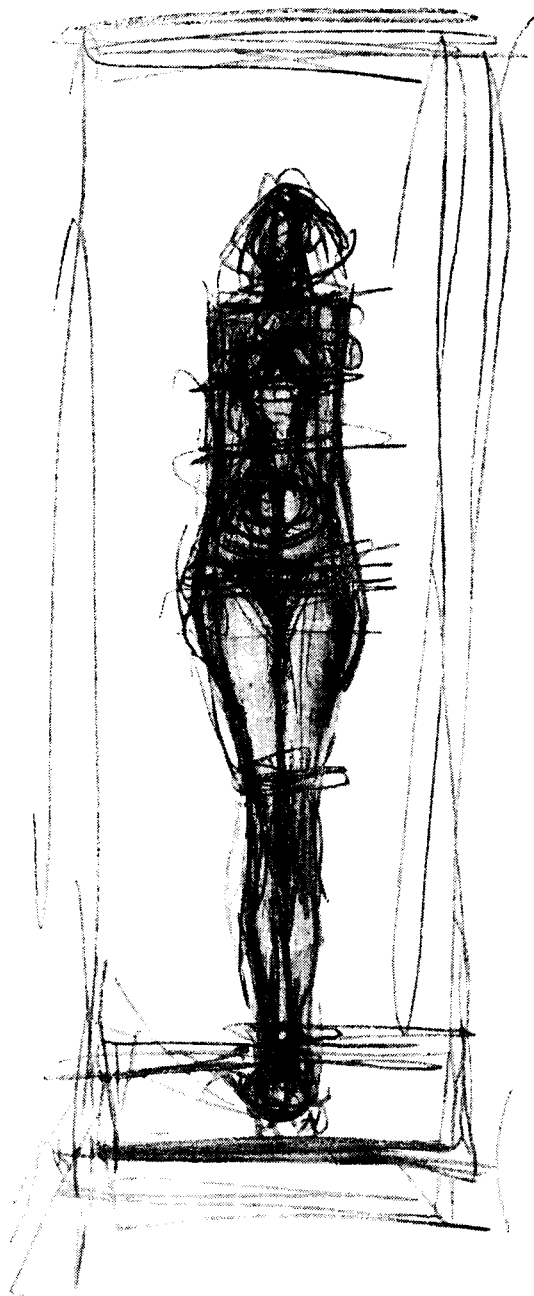
It was in 1930 that Giacometti became associated with the surrealist movement. He left a few years later when he began to

work once more with a model. This was the beginning of more than 15 years of stubborn and solitary research which have led to his present style.

For nearly thirty years Giacometti has occupied the same bare studio in the Montrouge quarter of Paris. In a small work-room which is lighted by one powerful naked electric bulb, he moves abruptly back and forth, working late into the night. The floor is strewn with dust, fragments of sculpture he has destroyed, and discarded sketches. His identity with his work is so complete that his material needs hardly surpass his physical necessities. He is a stocky man ; the power of his body is immediately perceptible beneath the nondescript clothes which, to him, are plainly no more than coverings. His head is large, set down close to heavy shoulders. He works in a state of intimate excitement with his materials, his long strong functional hands never still, never quite clean of contact with his work. They alone seem able to effect the transformation of lifeless matter to a condition of perceptible vitality.

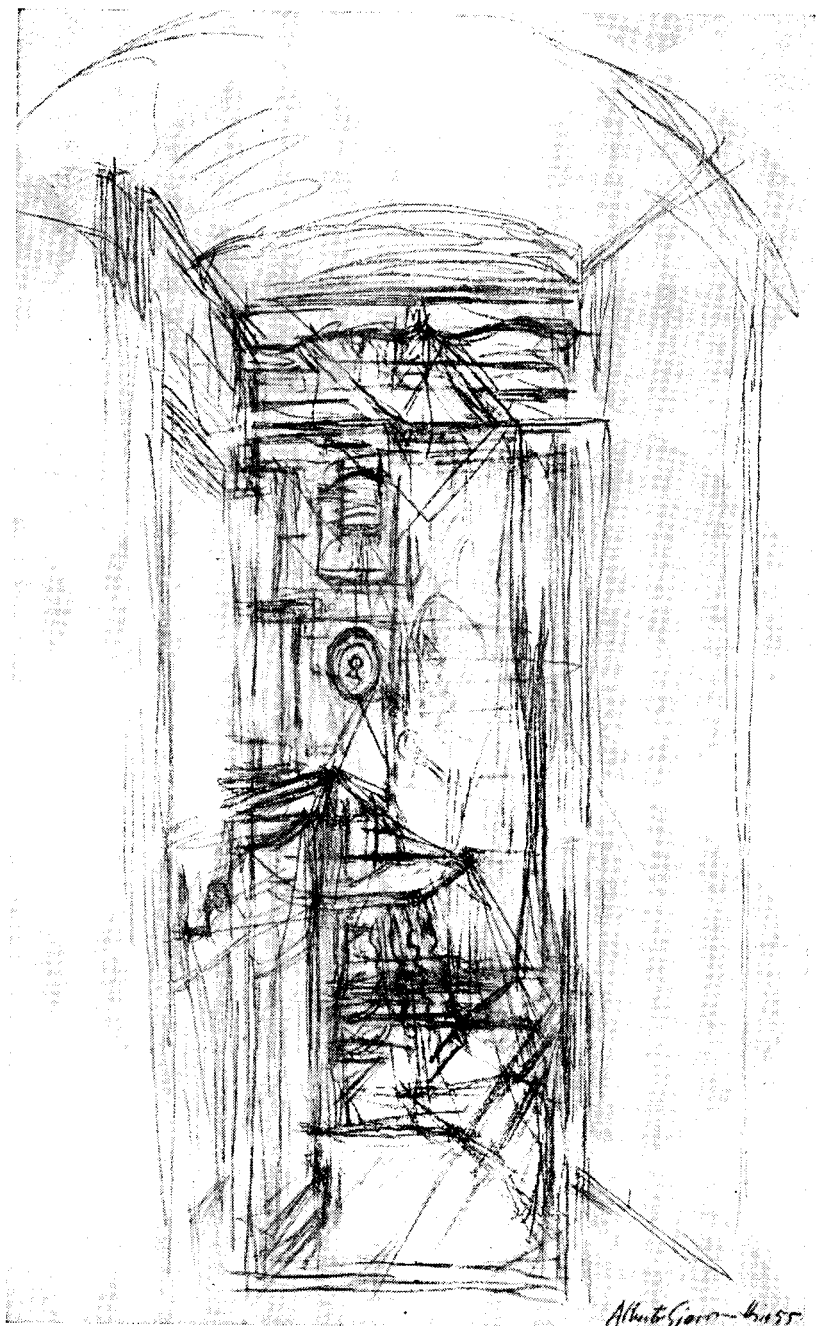
However fashionable the art of Giacometti may now have become, it owes nothing to fashion. His creative effort is an obsessive attempt to resolve the classic problems of representation. Each of his drawings exists autonomously, obeying its own rigorous laws of relativity, bound up in the sensation of space which is as essential to Giacometti as it was to Cézanne. No willful mannerism or calligraphic caprice, no sentimentality, self-indulgence or pastiche is permitted to inhibit a sincere or explicit representation. The figures and objects are seen by the artist not as pretexts but as ends in themselves and are to be seen similarly by us.

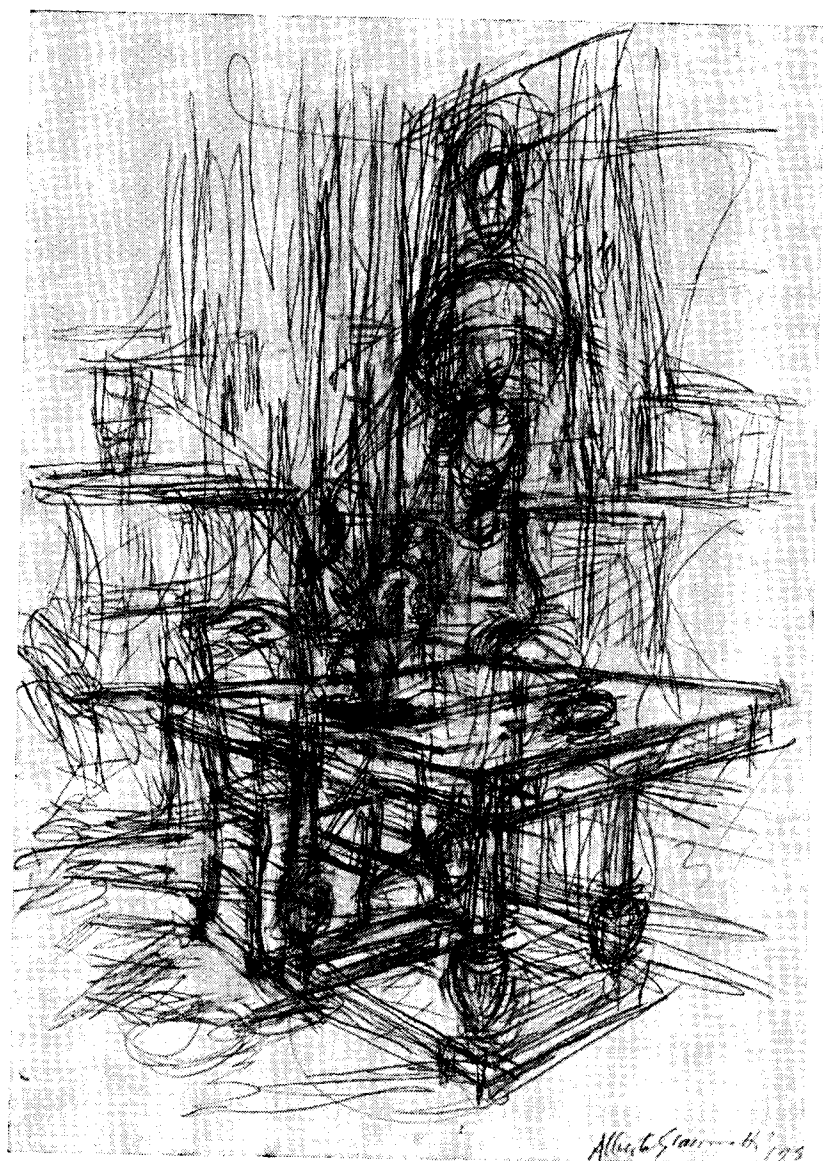
—JAMES LORD



Alberto Giacometti

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Giacometti at

In the fall of 1957 Giacometti was asked by the editors of the French magazine Arts to visit the great auto show which is held annually at Paris's Grand Palais and to comment afterwards on the relation of the car to sculpture. Could the "beauty" of a car be compared, he was asked, to that of a statue? His essay in reply follows.

The other day I went over to the Salon de l'Automobile. I was at once caught up in the mixture of commercial rivalries, publicity-seeking display, money, class-consciousness, strife, luxury, and fashion. In all that surrounding frenzy, one is never quite sure what one is looking at. I was struck one minute by the head of a man peering in front of me; then by the peculiar walk of a woman. Spots of bright color danced before my eyes: red, green, yellow—ugly on the whole. Then I noticed the flowers strewn in front of the cars and a moment later found myself facing a huge, black, shiny monster, edged in silver. It made me think of a vast safe and raised visions of bank buildings, villas on the Cote d'Azur with old men sunk inside them, and the massive hoard of money behind all that.

One car reminded me of a drive through Paris in a car very much like it several years back. It had been a special drive in the company of a special person and all the sights and sounds attached to the event now suddenly returned to mind. Another car recalled a certain walk in the country, also quite awhile ago. Then, all at once, in that enormous hall I found myself gazing at the ceiling and thinking of the Gare de l'Est, of the Tour Eiffel, of the year 1900, and of Emile Zola.

It is always difficult to see a car as a whole. The eye is usually attracted to one aspect or another, caught now by a headlight—that great mechanical eye with the look of an optical instrument, a giant microscope. A car nearby looked like dribbling marmalade.

I stopped before a running motor, fascinated as I always am by any machine in motion—as I was, before the war, by a certain calculating

the Salon d'Auto

machine in a shop window on the Blvd. Malesherbes. I could never pass by there, on my way back from the Galleries on the rue La Boétie, without staring at it for long minutes at a time. It was a marvelous machine, much more extraordinary than the motor at the auto show.

Not for a second in all that long afternoon at the exhibit did I have any thought of sculpture. Yes..., I did once, at sight of a figure on the hood of an engine which was a small imitation of the Victory of Samothrace. As I came out—it was already half past eight in the evening and quite dark—I couldn't find a taxi to take me home. By some strange coincidence there was nothing in the street but an old-fashioned carriage. I hailed the driver and set off. Stepping down a little while later at my door, I turned back to take a careful look at the carriage, the horse, and the driver, admiring the harmony between the three elements, the clarity and precision of the entire structure, each part contributing visibly to the flowing symmetry of the whole. I felt like drawing it there and then.

It does happen sometimes that I stop in the street to look at a car which reminds me of a toad, a bull, or a grasshopper; in the same way, perhaps, as I will gaze at a cloud, watching it ruffle into the shape of a head; or again, at a tree trunk, seeing there a tiger ready to spring.

A car, like every other machine, is a recent discovery. It descends not only from the carriage but from the horse and carriage combined. The resulting product is certainly strange: a complete mechanical organism, having eyes, a mouth, a heart, and intestines; it will eat and drink and go on working until it breaks—what an odd parody of a living being.

But it is a mistake to suppose that a car has anything to do with sculpture; no machine has, nor has any tool used before machines existed. Every tool, every machine must be a finished product in order to serve its purpose. The more finished, the more perfect it is; the better it serves its purpose, the more beautiful it is judged to be. Thus if a new machine works more efficiently, it at once displaces the old.

Returning now to sculpture, this is not the case. No statue can ever take the place of another because a statue is not a simple product. It is many things besides: it is both a mystery and a solution, a question and a reply. A statue can be neither finished nor perfect. Such considerations are irrelevant. When Michelangelo fashioned his last statue, the Pietà Rondanini, it was a new beginning. Had he worked on a thousand years longer making Pietà after Pietà he would never have repeated himself, never fallen backwards, never finished anything, but always swept further ahead. And the same might be said of Rodin.

A wrecked car, or any broken machine, is useless; it becomes scrap-iron. Yet if a Chaldean statue were broken into four pieces there would be no such loss of value. In the place of the first, four distinct works of art would emerge. And each separate part would be worth the original whole; each would retain, as would the whole, its power and its meaning.

A maimed Egyptian sculpture, a faded Rembrandt, scarred, and grown dark with time, these never lose their beauty. Unlike those objects which refer to nothing but themselves, a work of sculpture, or a painting, always lays claim to something beyond its own limits. But here another fact—of recent origin, like the machine—must be accounted for: the fact of “abstract” sculpture. This new mode of expression is not figurative but concrete. It creates and seeks to create a self-contained object, as self-contained and as finished as a machine, without reference to anything beyond itself. Now the question arises how to define this new kind of creation; how to place it with respect to the art discussed above.

One wonders what might become of abstract sculpture and abstract painting. How would a statue of Brancusi look if it were chipped or broken; or a painting of Mondrian if it were torn or turned dark with age? One wonders whether they belong to the same world as Chaldean sculpture, as Rembrandt and Rodin; or whether they form a world apart, closer to that of machines. I would go further and ask to what extent may they still be defined as sculpture, as painting; how much have they lost of the meaning in these words?

(Translated by Elizabeth Faure)

THE LAY BROTHER

Francesco's fingers must have had their say
About the blessed living near the Word
With waxen doll or with a beating bird,
While heavy oxen kept the cold away.

But here Duns Scotus' bells shoulder the rain.
Chill incantation keeps a chilly choir.
Waiting for snowy birds, I dream of fire:
Poor devils tell me folds could not contain

The ragged beggars dancing in the wild
Till hooded voices hobbled in dark frocks
Praised them into our tidy looking flocks.
I would not dream so. When I was a child

My father sent me scampering after strays.
In lambing season we worked through the night
Within our dancing fire's ring of light,
For there were many lambs to touch those days.

—ROBERT HUFF

THE CAMPUS ON THE HILL

Up the reputable walks of old established trees
They stalk, children of the *nouveaux riches*; chimes
Of the tall Clock Tower drench their heads in blessing:
“I don’t wanna play at your house;
I don’t like you any more.”
My house stands opposite, on the other hill,
Among meadows, with the orchard fences down and falling;
Deer come almost to the door.
You cannot see it, even in this clearest morning.
White birds band in the air between
Over the garbage landfill and those homes thereto adjacent,
Hovering slowly, turning, settling down
Like the flakes sifting imperceptibly onto the little town
In a waterball of glass.
Yet, this morning, beyond this quiet scene,
The floating birds, the backyards of the poor,
Beyond the shopping plaza, the dead canal, the hillside lying
 tilted in the air.

Tomorrow has broken out today:
 Riot in Algeria, in Cyprus, in Alabama;
 Aged in wrong, the empires are declining,
 And China gathers, soundlessly, like evidence.
 What shall I say to the young on such a morning?—
 Mind is the one salvation?—also, grammar?—
 No, my little ones lean not toward revolt. They
 Are the Whites, the vaguely furiously driven, who resist
 Their souls with such passivity
 As would make Quakers swear. All day, dear Lord, all day
 They wear their godhead lightly.
 They look out from their hill and say,
 To themselves, “We have nowhere to go but down;
 The great destination is to stay.”
 Surely the nations will be reasonable;
 They look at the world—don’t they?—the world’s way?
 The clock just now has nothing more to say.

—W. D. SNODGRASS

THE FIRE OF DESPAIR HAS BEEN OUR SAVIOUR

Today, autumn.

Heaven's roots are still.

O holy trees, rejoicing ruin of leaves,

Finch's castle, where we hear the champ of spring;

Oh not like the Middle Ages!: then iron ringing iron

At dawn, chill wringing

The grass, clatter of saddles,

The long flight on borrowed stone

Into the still air grey with the secret joy of crows.

Or the Ice Age:

Another child dead,

Turning bone stacks for bones, sleeves of snow blowing

Down from above, no tracks in the snow, in agony

Man cries out: like the wild hog, pierced, again,

Again, by teeth-spears

Grows carapace

From sheer despair, instants

Finally leading out of the snow-bound valley:

This autumn, instants

Of despair are deep

And hard to find for us, for in the woods at the end

Of roads is despair, yet the things that we must grasp,

The signs of the road are gone, hidden by spring and fall, leaving

A still sky here, a dusk there,

A dry cornleaf in the field; all

Trace lost, like a ship sinking,

Where what is left and what goes down both bring despair.

—ROBERT BLY

AND THEN, IT MAY BE SATURDAY

Four easy hours from San Francisco, yes
The sitting mallards tip like steel-plate ducks;
Between them, clay-pipe fishes leap and pop
Before your eyes, before your eyes are there.
As advertised, no crossed gray crosses mar
This primitive green backdrop, streaked with blue:
A frequency of birds, those poised performers,
Trace a thin band on purest wash of sky.
Here in the lake, the mountains cool their claws
And show their sleepless nerves merely as trees.
Stretch on the soft hot splinters of the pier,
Clench and extend your tackle, float it gently,
Settle your toes in rest, and take a bead.
Look up, look down, the birds move far and clear
Beyond green fish that measurelessly tread
The green plush colonnades of an obscure
Courtiership. The woman by you wakens.
Great arcs of growth and flight describe a sphere.

Two easy voices and a boat from now,
This soon the evening limited of wind
At distant crossings laying dismal sounds,
The sun comes to your level like a friend.
Dying a friend, it leaks away, unhurried
As a man of time. No cloud attends
The last thin smile. But then, what upstart humps
His shoulders at the death-bed's left—
What bastard sun breaks on the waning west?
The ripe orange orb of power, risen, rots—

The black holes in your eyes too black for water.
The bomb. Who would have thought. The bomb. But there
The bastions rise until the capstone's on
That tipping monolith of cloud; and now
As ever a south-flying mallard swings
Like any late commuter to the moving
Platform of the warping, wooden water.

The trees fall singly into dark formation.
You, with your untried gun, inherit all.
Down in the valleys, dust rain will be falling
And leaning masts above suburban dwellings
Claw empty pictures from the breeding air.
And you, with your lines dry, inherit all.
Row to the shore. The bomb. The bomb, the bastards.
Tell it, the two of you. Say until morning.
Say till the world retakes its age-old shapes,
Lifting again the green receiving branches
Eight easy minutes from the sun. The roads
Will have their fill awhile of lemming armies;
Much headless flesh will take its time to die.
While mobs convulse, their giant thought gone static,
Try your mere voices; try small work of hands.
One must begin by helping one; for you,
Best-armed of pioneers, most learned savage,
Granted a day's north wind, inherit all.

—GEORGE STARBUCK



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Kalahari Rose

IT was before sunrise. Hendrik Gonzalez was scrubbing down the little white deck of the boat and she watched him at work. He kept his face averted, shy and young. In his movements was a curious absorption, a completeness as if each action had its precise rhythm, a harmonic of his fundamental living tone. She knew he was instinctively musical and it seemed natural to see his unusual balance in those terms. He had on a blue short-sleeved vest and tight faded denims rolled up to the knee. His thick black hair was too long, untidy, and he shook it from his face with a slight, easy movement. Gonzalez—of Portuguese origin, or the name could as well have come to him like other accidents in the mystery of his past. He would be inconspicuous in any of the hot fishing harbors of the Mediterranean, brown, small-boned but with an ancient physical delicacy, a power beyond himself. And yet he was far removed from the Old World, a colored boy who had drifted from the country of the Western Cape to become a fisherman at Saldanha Bay.

They heard two rapid shots, a left-right of a sporting gun, and he half turned, looking not at her but to one side over the stern of the boat.

“He has hit this time maybe, mevrou.” He did not smile though his eyes were mocking. Then he raised his dark glance to follow the birds wheeling and crying above the enormous quiet surface of the bay and the grey sand-dunes dotted with tough little desert bushes. She said nothing but followed his look. As the gulls flew up from the grey water higher and higher into the sky they threw back suddenly an astonishing metallic gleam, a flash, turning on black-tipped wings into the level rays of the coming sun.

“How wonderful,” she said.

— *Drawing by Gustave Falk*

"They are first in the sun," he said and looked to the East above the low black hills beyond the sand-dunes. The sky shaded from orange and pink to a pulsing dome of blue, cloudless. All round the horizon were the softening color layers, salmon and pale heliotrope merged into fire-blue. In a few minutes all would disappear under the white, throbbing, brilliant African day. He stood leaning on the broom a moment and then went on scrubbing, his head to one side. She stepped across to the planks of the jetty to collect the things sent down from the house for the day's boat trip. When she stood up she saw the man with the gun coming at a distance along the edge of the bay. The gun was across his shoulder and a brown and white spaniel followed him. Sunlight was touching the factory roofs, it crept down the boat masts and soon she felt the flush of pleasant warmth on her neck. She turned full-face into the sun, smiling, creasing her wide, light-blue eyes.

She had turned away from the man with his dog and sporting-gun to face into the sunlight and with her smile of pleasure the lines smoothed gradually out of her forehead. Unthinkingly she loosened the clip and shook out her soft brown hair. There was one perfect time of the day here, the half-hour before and after sunrise. She could imagine how, gazing over a like sunrise on the Mesopotamian desert, men had seen their pattern of the Creation. They had witnessed the unfolding of a lordly earth out of chaos. She, a northerner, blonde, from the little nation of Holland clinging with bare nails to the watery edge of a cold continent, she had felt her heart expand to Africa, the sun, the desert, until she had slowly grown aware within herself of an unknown and disturbing person. For this one hour she wanted to be left in peace, with the strong melon-scented sea water, the birds, the surrounding desert; and with Hendrik Gonzalez too since he was a part of it; he might well have been part of the Creation itself, simple and alive, still ignorant, wondering but smiling at the earth. The way he had said "They are first in the sun," as if he loved the birds for their marvellous daring, and did not envy them.

"Hello Mariana," the man with the gun called.

"Oh hello Philip."

"You're up early."

He came nearer, his grey eyes flickering in a familiar smile. He had a war scar that drew up his right eyelid at the corner and made him look more provocative, restless. His lips were red and moist and he had a short reddish moustache, his skin very sunburnt and peeling. He looked English, prodigiously, amusingly English; almost unbelievable there on the barren coast, tall with a high-bridged nose and hard chin and his clothes in careless good taste except for the loose rawhide velschoens. He was a generation removed from England. South Africa had reared and developed him, white South Africa, leaving him oddly incomplete with a kind of blank at the back of his mentality.

"I missed," he said. "A sand-piper flying a real crazy zig-zag. Wonderful practice really, those birds."

"Are you going up to the Hotel?"

He came close to her, smiling warily and put the shotgun butt down between his feet. "You're not going out in the boat are you?"

"I am, of course, and I shall wait for you. But please don't keep me long."

"Not today Mariana. My directors are coming down from Cape Town."

"Oh, then I shall go alone."

"Your husband's coming down too."

"I know."

"And you're not waiting to see him?"

"No," she answered without raising her eyes. "He hates sailing. I'll go now if you can't come."

"Don't be silly—not alone."

"With Hendrik, of course."

"But Mariana, he's clueless. What if the wind gets up stronger than usual?"

"We can put up a sail and come romping home."

"Which sail?"

She glanced impatiently at him and gathered up the basket and parcels and the two short fishing-rods with large-size American reels.

"Mariana," he said, suddenly tense and dropping the stubborn, enduring outer shell he wore habitually. "I mean this—can't we hoist sail and head slap out into the Ocean, to Tristan da Cunha, or Rio, or the Gulf of Mexico. It's being done every day, why not by us? The boat's as sturdy as a tree. All we need is water and three months' supplies."

"Wonderful," she said. He had followed her aboard and she leaned against the low deck-house facing him. "Get finished with your directors and with Frikkie and we can take a sail round to Cape Columbine tomorrow."

"Cape Columbine be blowed. Mariana I'm serious. What's to stop us sailing out West away from all this; just you and I."

"And what about our deck-hand, Hendrik?"

"He would never venture out of sight of land."

"Nor would I, Philip. It's a healthy instinct. Well, the sun will soon be getting hot. Help me cast off, Philip."

He made no move. The smile came back on his lips and danced in that provocative eye, a steel-hard shielding smile.

"Mariana, can you guess why my directors and Frikkie and his lot are all bundling down here today?"

"If it's business, I can't guess; I don't want to know, really. And they are not coming for a picnic, are they?"

"No." He was gazing at her with a twitch of his lips. She spoke perfect English but with a wholly lovable accent which gave her speech precision yet sounded as if her mouth had in it some small soft membrane muting the sharpness of a foreign tongue.

"I don't care either," he said. "I could do anything. I could send them all to hell, if only I was sure of you Mariana."

"Why, don't you feel sure?"

"You never let me."

"Philip I love you more than I love anyone else. You know I don't care about Frikkie."

"And he, does he know?"

She had ducked into the little cabin to tidy away things and came up, leaning her elbows on the companion rails.

"Something is wrong with you, something awful. We have never asked questions, we have never made confessions. No. Between us we have been free. But now Philip you

sound like a small boy, afraid. You are in a panic."

He laughed, lifting the gun across his shoulders. The spaniel stayed on the jetty, shuddering from nose to tail with anxiety and watching his slightest move. Gonzalez was up in the bows on his haunches deftly polishing the brass.

"Well, goodbye," Philip said and held out a hand. She put her hand in his.

"But what is this—why goodbye?"

"Wish me luck anyway."

"Of course I do Philip."

"Against your husband?"

"Now you are being a small boy again. Philip, if you mix with man-eaters you know what to expect. No, I won't wish you luck against him. But if you are still alive and not eaten up tomorrow, come sailing to Cape Columbine."

"Tomorrow. And tonight you will have the company of the excellent and successful Frikkie. I may be his employee by then, obliged to ask his permission for a day off with his wife. Or I may be out on my ear."

She had lowered herself into the cabin and was so long there he thought she had not heard. He stepped back to the jetty planks and the dog jumped up eagerly, fawning on him. She bobbed out to wave, her face a creamy brown tan with a natural freshness in her cheeks, a Northern freshness, and round white teeth.

"Good luck Philip!"

"I need it," he called back and the muscles of his face answered, imperfectly, with a ghastly smile. She watched him go, one hand in his pocket, the other hung across the gun stock and the barrels aslant his shoulder gleaming blue in the sun. His back was slender and straight like a boy's but he swung along ungainly and slapped down the rawhide velschoens in an aimless manner among the small pebbles and shells and the scrunching sand. She felt against him a hot centre of fury. He needed protection and she could not feel protective; he seemed to have come to her like a child only to leave her dismayed at the bewildering lack within her, the lack of feminine tenderness. She dreaded she too was petrifying, and when she felt down in her heart for a flower

she would find a Kalahari rose, the perfect form of a rose left by the fine chiselling of the desert sand, but not a rose at all, scentless, lifeless, a thing of soft crumbling stone. Was she going that way too?

He had forgotten to help her cast off and Hendrik started the auxiliary motor and slipped the moorings himself. The bows swung slowly out until he let in the gear. The craft gave a little thrill of life and she felt the wheel answer. A small gull dipped close over her head in a salute of unexpressed joy and she could see for a moment its beautiful ruby-red bill glowing in the sunlight as if suffused with translucent blood. Ripples lapped under the bows. Hendrik was busy with the mainsail which they would hoist when they met the first wind. He leaned on the bulging canvas along the boom unhurriedly loosening the ties.

The boat skimmed on with the little engine muttering evenly and a slight sway of the mast. The water surface was filmy with the sub-visual life of uncountable sea organisms and at intervals a big sheen-pink jellyfish undulated on its blind course. Foam patches sailed by. The sun was now throwing down big irregular stampings of pure gold on the sea and Mariana narrowed her eyes like a fishing skipper and scanned calmly the whole lazy expanse receding into colorless, opaque density at its furthest. There was twenty miles of uninterrupted sailing inside the landlocked bay, and off to the West was the wide opening to the Atlantic, low rocky islands, and the Ocean murmuring, cold, restless, grey-blue.

"No fish," she said to Gonzalez.

He looked up and pointed off the bow. "A shoal there mevrou, maasbankers or haarders."

She saw now the sea-birds converging on an air-circus a mile off; a flight of black cormorants skimmed like a great arrow-head low over the boat, their hooked wings hissing with speed. Small shoal-fish were merely a good sign, no more. The bigger game would be somewhere about, off the islands or way out in the open.

Hendrik slowed down the motor until it was barely turning over, coughing water from the cooling pipe and

sending smoke in whisps over the surface. She could see what he was preparing for. The morning breeze was coming across from the desert hills and sand-dunes. Like frost, like a shiver under an unexpected cold hand, the sea face wrinkled and drew into itself and shook with a dark sigh. She secured the wheel and climbed out quickly and together they hauled up the big red-and-white striped mainsail. The canvas filled softly as if with light, not air, and a rich glow streamed down over them and on the deck and sea. The head turned a few points out towards the ocean and then the first full puff caught the sail and the little boat dipped, almost leaping for the endless freedom of the open West.

Hendrik Gonzalez was clueless with a boat, Philip said. He got flustered when given orders in yachting terms. But left to himself he knew what to do and she gave no orders; she did what happened next, she fished or sunbathed or sailed or simply drifted in a lolling oily trough, and she knew he was watching with piercing eyes like a sea-eagle all three elements, the grey-toothed treacherous desert coast that he never let out of his sight, the water and the clouds. He was always one move ahead of the elements.

The wind they had caught was a land-breeze born of the desert and it had in it the smell of sleeping sand, the morning dew quickly sucked up and the bitter edge of arid herbs. It blew over tiny hamlets with a well and clay huts but no trees, and over parched little fishing villages. It smelt of them, their desolation. It blew over the cramped graveyards where the dead slept dry under a ring of crumbled whitening pearl-shells and rock-crystals—waterless flowers in the white sand. She tried to think of life in a village like that, of growing up, manhood and womanhood.

“What part of the country do you come from?” she asked her deck-hand who was laying out fishing tackle on the fore-deck. He turned his head like a wild animal stopped in its tracks by a suspicious sound. His glance slid across her face and beyond to the land. There was deference in those eyes but also, she thought, a streak of insolence. He was proud in his own way, proud of his acquired skill on the water, of his success with the factory girls. Insolence was a substitute

for dignity in the face of the white race, yet the subconscious dignity was there all the time, in his strength and manhood and youth and in the balance and harmony of him pitted against the elements. He lifted a hand in a short gesture, speaking quietly.

"My home is there, mevrou. But a long way, over the Cold Bokkeveld Mountains. Mevrou would not know the place."

He was not inviting more questions about himself.

"You have learnt to be a fisherman then, instead of a farm hand. Have you been far out to sea?"

"Far enough, mevrou. Beyond that is the grave of the white sailors."

"Why do you say that?"

"Many ships, many lives have been lost there, they say. The women who go to collect feather-down of the malmocks blown up from the sea onto the beaches sometimes find the bone of a drowned man there."

"The sea is full of death, but you are not afraid when you are on it."

"No."

"If you know the presence of death and you see the workings of death and you live in the mercy of being spared, then it loses its terror. But when you live with a hole in your heart and something unknown up against the hills, something that is always behind you, then you turn into something fear-ridden like a man with a secret cancer. You become a partner of death, destructive."

"Mevrou?" he said, frowning, puzzled. Then he turned away and went on with his work, coloring darkly as if a door had been slammed in his face. She was no longer talking to him.

She felt exultant holding the boat into the wind, its whole frame vibrating gently, eager and joyful, the gold on the ripples and, funnelled down the big sheet of the sail, a ruddy fall of light. It was her husband's boat; she had got him to buy it and he had sailed in it once only. He was sea-sick and hated it. They had bought it six weeks ago and of that time she had spent every week except one at Saldanha, loving the

boat, the sea and the intoxicating freedom they shared. Her seaside house was built of white crumbly sandstone, two former fisherman's cottages joined together, enlarged and modernized but retaining something primitive—the ceilings of smoke-darkened polished bamboos, an old-fashioned bake-oven and pot-hooks and roasting spit in the kitchen. She had the floors done with Dutch tiles and put blue Dutch china on the dresser shelves. Her husband was not a sensitive man but he had the delicacy to leave her to herself. She knew it would not last and she felt as she had in Holland when a child of eleven on the eve of war, tantalized, excited but resigned to the unknown.

She met Frikkie after Holland was liberated; he was then an Air Force lieutenant, handsome with his dark burnt skin and violet-blue eyes, a rather long face, droll and irresponsible as if he were always ready with a joke against each new absurdity. He did think things were absurd, especially the stuffiness of old Europe that everybody was busy crawling back into after the upheaval. Holland was amusing, and to him was no more his mother country than was Japan, although he spoke Afrikaans, a close relative of Hollands. She was sixteen, slender, bright-eyed and hurt deeply in her consciousness by the occupation, the treachery and suspicion and the awful denial of freedom. She had seen Frikkie as a gay knight-errant, an emanation from the far world of sun and freedom, broadness, broad horizons, distance, toleration after the little cold concentration camp of her native Holland.

She lavished on him an unconditional worship, measureless and generous as only a child's love could be. They were married in South Africa two years later, and she began to see him at work as a civilian. He had a science degree but he was muscling into business. Two passions absorbed him, an old childhood love of things mechanical and, transforming and reacting on it, an almost insane material ambition. He read and seemed to enjoy books of popular mathematics. For hours he would sit toying with an outsize slide-rule, calculating, calculating, calculating, and always there would

be a half-smile on his handsome but droll face as if he found an intense fascination and enchantment in the precision of symbols. She lost track of his interests and pursuits and his involvement in the financial side of affairs. This was a time when she was discovering herself and simultaneously Frikkie and his associates. She had soon felt the incongruity of thinking of Africa, or South Africa as a land of free horizons, a "young" country. It was neither; it was incredibly, primordial ancient and exclusive. Only what was ancient or instinctual belonged, merged integrally with the great somberly glittering reality. Everything else was alien. The dark races belonged by a rhythm and sympathy that had nothing to do with what the world called civilization. When they were at the pinnacles of civilization they would still merge. It took an antelope perhaps millions of years to adapt its poise and coloring into the cycle, the throb of the bush-veld. And that ancestry was his claim, a title that could not be understood save by the most acute fineness of sense. A white woman might find the true harmonic, the vibration of Africa, because she was more instinctual, ancient and tender in her feelings, provided she was untrammelled, not dominated by her males. But the white male was an alien. She could not explain it, but since the understanding had gestated within her she had watched and felt and had found no exception. The white males were alien. Most of the females were too, but the men remained insidiously apart, angled, unhappy.

She remembered seeing as a child in Holland an art book with a strange and shocking reproduction of a canvas by some South American painter whose name she had forgotten. It was the head of a young man in profile with large feeling eyes, soft mouth and a brow lined subtly with incomprehension as if he failed quite to grasp some thought. And everything about the head was full, alive and perceptive except that the artist had painted the back of the skull open and empty. The bone cut away and the brain matter visible but scooped out. And the face giving no indication that he knew what was missing.

To her, Frikkie was like that. Some part of his brain which he had been gifted with at birth had gone dead,

smashed up or severed or withered from disuse. The rest of the brain was terribly alive, virulent, avid. But he was not a whole person, and once you knew you always waited for his thought to run into that dead hollow like a train skipping the rails. Others were like that; she began to judge men by how much she thought was lost, Frikkie's business friends, the set they mixed with at parties and dances and official functions. All of them had a point like a notch on a steam-gauge when their eyes suddenly went blank. They were no more capable of thought because there was nothing left to think with, just the hole, the pulp. Sometimes she would see it or imagine it when she read about things that happened; big, gentle and unroused men brought to a dead stop, and then the rise of fear like impure blood in the neck arteries, the quick turn of the head like a snake's to deceit, violence, panic.

She had also seen streams of her own people passing through Cape Town after the Dutch pulled out of the East Indies. They were whitemen, Dutchmen, but you could not call them Europeans, they were so incomplete, so damaged. In a way they were like the white males of South Africa. She wondered if this was the fate of the white man and his civilizing mission, that in the end he lost his grip on his own values. Or was it merely the colonist, the master race, the *colon* regardless of race who consumed himself? Maybe the Romans had streamed back while their empire collapsed with just the same fury and incomprehension in their impaired brains as the Dutch out of Java, the English from India or the remnants of the Conquistadores from the Americas.

Mariana had thought she had found the exception when she met Philip. He was a businessman but a rebel, unorthodox in his methods, keen and impressionable about everything. He joked that his grandfather had owned a £25,000 pottery in Burslem. His father had made—and lost—£50,000 as a sugar planter in South Africa and there was nothing left for him to do but double up again. He started with a rock-lobster boat in the Cape waters, went on to own two little deck vessels and trawl nets and then switched into processing—canned and frozen sea foods, fish-meal, oils, fertilizer. His original

and branch companies were nearing a capitalization of £100,000.

"What will you do then?" somebody had asked him.

"Chuck the whole thing up and breed horses," he said. He was a bachelor and lived on a small farm in an old gabled Dutch house he had repaired in faithful detail. She was enchanted with Philip and with his home, his collection of prints and paintings and old weapons. His only pose was that of an English gentleman. But he was too thin-skinned; he laughed at his own ideal for fear others would laugh first. On his boats, he worked like a deck-hand or mechanic. He stood over the factory machines or would slosh about among the fish-tanks in thigh-boots. His working clothes stank of fish. He lent his factory hands the company lorries for Sunday picnics and outings and went along with them to drink sherry and enjoy the fun. And yet, behind it all, was a gaping inadequacy. He could never 'chuck up' his business because he was too involved and his methods made him inefficient and vulnerable. He made no real or intimate contact with his employees and felt always the ugly blank between himself and them. And with Mariana he was lost. He lay with her feeling the agony steal down into his soul that she was coming to despise him, this lithe, smooth-skinned intangible girl who looked at him solemnly but with a rising impulse of laughter in the glistening light-blue of her eyes. They did not discuss it, that was part of their convention. But he felt with her like a glazed desert-insect whose wings she could pluck off one by one from curiosity when she felt inclined.

Frikkie, her husband, had been fascinated by Philip's enterprise. He knew nothing about boats, fish or food-packing but he got busy, probing, calculating. He saw Philip's weak spots, his business inefficiency and his lack of capital, and he was amused at his friendship with Mariana. He and his associates went in with a rival company. They had backing from a special finance corporation and they had plenty of pull—permits, quotas, labour direction smoothed in months the way Philip had trodden in years. They were waiting to absorb the unorthodox amateur and they knew

his limit was near. The final straw had been an official contract for fishmeal giving them effective control and laying Philip's concern open to their pressure.

Mariana knew the broad drift of the matter and refused to be concerned with details. She had no wish to be drawn in, to save Philip or to intercede with her husband. Frikkie was not acting from jealousy. He was a natural man-eater. When he had swallowed Philip and his outfit he would turn to something else and devour that. Most likely, she thought, he would pull out of the fish business at a sizeable profit, sell everything, the cottage and boat as well as the factories and jettys and trawlers. Then she would be stranded again. She felt a pang about that, but about Philip she had a different feeling, a stab of guilt, of regret that she found no desire, no tenderness to shelter him in. When she said she loved him he knew all the while it was to soothe, a touch of salve, leaving the torment to rage deep in his breast.

The wind was blowing up more briskly and Gonzalez moved back to help her take in the sail. They were passing the low rocky headland about a mile to windward and the boat was leaping the easy swell like a beautiful bird.

"Is mevrou going to fish?" Gonzalez asked.

"No, I am going to sail. Will the wind last Hendrik?"

"The wind will last and it is coming up stronger."

"I am going down the wind and then beat back level with Vondeling Island and run in on the afternoon blow. I shall stay and fish at the turn if there's time."

She wanted to sail out of sight of land and steer back by the compass, and she wondered from the cautious way he looked round if he had guessed her thoughts. He hauled up the foresail, the canvas filled and they turned, racing down the sparkling path of the south-easter. She laughed aloud at the exhilaration of surging movement.

"Could you throw out a spoon in case of tunny," she called. She watched Hendrik pay out a few fathoms of line and secure the reel. Turning, she could see through the green water of the boat's wake a glint of the sun on the silver spinning lure.

"Do you go out again tonight?"

"Yes, mevrou, trekking," he answered, standing against the mast and without looking at her. Trekking was net fishing inshore.

"Could I come trekking?"

"You could come mevrou. But it may be dangerous."

"What can be dangerous about it? you don't go out far."

He did not answer but watched the flicker of the rod.

"You mean women don't go trekking?"

"*Dis gevaarlik*," he repeated his warning of danger.

"Well, I am not afraid. I'm sailing out of sight of land today, over the grave of the white sailors. Do you mind?"

He shook his head.

"Can you swim?"

"I cannot swim, mevrou."

"Why don't you learn—you are a fisherman." But he merely shrugged in perfect indifference. He sat down with his back to the mast and his small dark feet drawn up together. The wind ruffled his black hair and blew lank strands across his eyes.

They sailed on and the land went down into a reddish gauzy band between the sea and the sky. She asked him to take the wheel and went up and stretched out on the forward deck. She had on a brief sun-suit and her back and legs were exposed to the sun. Pressing down her breasts she felt the warmth of the scrubbed planks strike through the thin print, like the warmth of a man's body. But the ship was female—people called it that, She. Mariana loved the little craft, could it be an unnatural love? She smiled. No, a ship was of all things conceived by man the most masculine, wholly virile, a supple vaulting splendour infused with pure spirit. Maybe the placid rush boats of Egyptian papyri were female but the tall-masted craft of the North was all male. She was in love with the sea itself and its dwellers. The sea could never be conquered, it was too wily and ancient, too patient, cruel. Africa was like that, all the while striking back secretly at its would-be dominators, finally unconquerable. First into the dawn through the deep-back millenia of the Pharoahs, it would also be last in the evening of man and woman, their life-cradle and their bier. That was the germ of what she had

begun to discover. She wanted her dreams and her daring, she wanted to be free and to be left in peace in that hour of creation announced by the rising sun. Turning, she could see in the angle of her eye the swift curves of the big sail, red and white against the distilled blue fire of the sky. She rolled back her head on her arms and fell asleep.

Mariana did not know if they had sailed over the grave of the white sailors, out of sight of land. She woke to find Hendrik Gonzalez had brought the boat to in sight of a rocky island with a squat red-and-black lighthouse.

"But that's Dassen Island!" she said, amazed.

"You slept a long time, mevrou."

"We are miles and miles south, how ever did we get here?"

"The boat sailed, mevrou."

"My God, and I missed it. Was it wonderful?"

"The wind got up strong and I came round," he swept his arm in a curve. "Now it has turned south and we can get home without the engine."

"That's good. Have you caught any fish?"

"No fish. If mevrou wants to fish now I will bait a line, there are perhaps snoek running."

"I'll sail, and I want to get something to eat. You get on with the fishing."

She turned the boat before the light southerly breeze and they both settled to the routine of the voyage home. She felt drowsy, full of content. Her skin tingled and with her even heartbeats she felt inwardly the blood ripple in her neck and down her stomach and thighs. Tiny needle-points of light sparked in her eyes. After half an hour Hendrik cried out, "Hey, skelm!"

He reeled in one of the lines and a long slender fish, silver and gleaming with black and purple, was swung on to the deck, snapping vicious jaws. He clubbed the snoek deftly and threw it in a fish-basket. He did not glance at her and she turned to check the course. The sun was a quarter angle over the sea. They should, if all went well, make the jetty and home before it set.

Later, the wind failed and it was after dark when they

came in. Fishermen helped them tie up and took off Hendrik's catch of snoek. At the cottage she found a note from Frikkie; they were waiting dinner for her at the hotel. She had dressed when she heard his car sweep round the gravel outside. He came in flushed and excited, his long droll face printed with an ineradicable smile. There was a brightness in his deep-blue eyes, attractive perhaps, except that he had been drinking and the lines of his skin were strained, dissolute. They talked, on the way to the hotel, about the boat and the day's trip.

The dinner party took up all of the small main dining room. The directors were there from both sides, Frikkie's people and Philip's. Some had brought their wives for the day's outing. The factory managers and a few others Mariana did not know lined up to wait for their places. Philip looked like a high-school rugby captain who has lost his match and broken a knee but is smiling bloodlessly through the wreck of his dreams. She was suddenly nauseated and bitterly angry. The way his eyes sought hers across the room like a beaten dog, the drawn smile. Her forehead seemed to go icy cold. Why did he take his thrashing like this, why not send them to hell, as he had said? There they all were, lumpy, preposterous half-men, and he in his terrible thin skin quivering with pain. They were waiting for Frikkie to get at the table. He was the hero of the evening, he had the right pull, he had their money safe enough in his control. They bunched about, humored him and roared at his drolleries. She went round to Philip, calmer now, and looked directly but softly into his eyes.

"I'm sorry, Philip."

"It's all right."

"Is that all you want to say? I know you are hurt, Philip, but you're not blaming me, are you?"

"Why should I?"

"You said if you were sure about me..."

"I'm sure."

She was frightened for a moment, wondering what he meant. His voice sounded so battered and hollow.

"Philip why do you stay here and let them tear the flesh off your bones? Look at them, they are lizards, alligators.

And Frikkie, tonight he's all evil to his marrow. You can't stay, Philip."

"I will, I'll show them."

"My God," she said, feeling sick.

Hendrik Gonzalez sat on the step outside the kitchen door of the hotel. It was late, almost midnight by the wheel of the stars. He was waiting for two serving men and the wine steward to make up his boat-crew for the trekking. Plenty of time, all the ages before dawn. But they would be a little tired rushing to and fro, waiting on the white people. He had seen his mevrou leave earlier in the evening. She took her husband's car and drove herself down to the cottage although it was only five minutes' walk. White women were like she-leopards, full of terror and savagery, they valued themselves highly even if they were ugly old bones in a sack of skin. But she was not like that, she was not simply another in the run of white women. She was a foreigner, proud and high in her own right, an *ulanner*, aristocrat. Yet how could you explain her wanting to come and trek fish with a boatload of rough men? Or what was more, her choice of a husband. Women were beyond understanding.

He had his mandolin across his knees and plucked muted



notes from it with the soft of his thumb. He sang quietly a song about a Cape girl with her hair in plaits and bells at her ankles.

The Englishman came out of the hotel alone and walked off; tall and straight he looked against the skyline in the light of the stars with his gun across one shoulder. What was he going to shoot at night—a dikkop perhaps? But how could one tell where the dikkops flew except by their sad baby-like cry which seemed to drop out of the stars themselves. The Englishman was crazy.

A little later the three men of his boat crew came out at the kitchen door and Hendrik Gonzalez stood up, stretching. One of them handed him a half-bottle of sherry which he slid into the inner pocket of his jacket.

"Come," he said, hitching the cord of the mandolin on his shoulder. They took the path to the bay in single file, Gonzalez picking a tune on sharp strings and the others humming. From the hotel behind them they heard a burst of laughter.

"Ag, they spend money like water but with their tips they are mean," the wine steward said. Their feet raked into the shelly gravel, going down. As they passed some distance below Frikkie's cottage the curtains of a window were thrown open and they could see the outline of the white woman against the shine of an oil-lamp. Then the lamp was blown out and Gonzalez was almost sure he saw the pale shape of the girl again in the black window frame. But it could be a trick of his eyes. The stars seemed to sway like leaves on fire in the enormous black trees of a forest.

They took the pole across their shoulders and slid the boat down the sand and shingle until it was borne up by the cold water. One by one they jumped in and began putting out the oars. The net was piled in a great black heap in the stern with the cork floats faintly visible like a row of toy train wheels.

"Ready," Hendrik called.

Across the desert sands beside the bay came a single shot.

"Ai!" he said, resting forward on the oar. "That is the mad Englishman."

"What's he shooting?"

"No, it is not like him at all. He always fires bam-bam—left and right. I thought he might be after dikkop."

"But who could see a dikkop in the dark?"

"Ag, then he must have shot himself."

"*Toe maar!*" another of the three reproved him mildly.

Gonzalez dipped his oar and pulled a long, gentle sweep and when he raised it from the black surface it sheared into the air with a broad flash of phosphorescence, scattering drops like fiery quicksilver.

"Ah, that's lucky," one of the serving men sang out, a touch of rapture in his voice, running out his roar with a rumble through the iron ring. "That's a lucky sign for us, I say—lucky."



HOUNDS

Catastrophies beyond our true renown
Conscript us out of heaven till we stand
Embattled in our customs, going down.

Imagine thought among immediate fires
Like some antique philosophers; perhaps
Honor's the strange summation of desires.

It may be so. That is our living curse:
To learn, unsteadily, how lean we come
Down to the level ripeness of the hearse.

I stand against that coming, though my share
Of every passion track my honor there.

—JOSEPH LANGLAND

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Jack Cope (*Kalahari Rose*) was born on a farm not far from Zululand and started his career as a newspaper man in Capetown. In 1936 he came to London as a correspondent, but prefers to live in South Africa. His stories have often appeared in the *London Magazine* and a recent novel, *The Golden Oriole*, has just been published by Heinemann.

Philip Roth (*The Conversion of the Jews*) is a graduate of Bucknell and the University of Chicago where he is now an instructor of English. Though only twenty-five years old, his fiction has already been widely published in *The Chicago Review*, *Commentary*, and Martha Foley's Best Short Stories of 1956; and a short novel, *Expect the Vandals*, will soon appear in *Esquire*. He is currently at work on a novel about Americans in post-war-Germany.

Gordon Woodward (*The Night Drivers*) was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada in 1921. During the second World War he served six years in the Canadian Army and has since been employed in a variety of jobs ranging from Labor Foreman to work for C.B.S. television. His fiction has been published in *New Voices* 2, *Accent*, and *Maclean's*.

INTERVIEW

George A. Plimpton (*Interview with Ernest Hemingway*), one of the founders of THE PARIS REVIEW five years ago, lives at present in New York. For this issue he also supplied the text for the portfolio on the artist Vali.

PORTFOLIOS

James Lord (*text on Giacommetti*) is the author of one novel, *No Traveller Returns*, which has been published in England, France and the U.S.A. Another novel, *Something of Success*, was published this winter by John Day. His short stories have appeared in *Horizon* and *Botteghe Oscure*. He lives in Paris.

POETRY

Robert Bly (*The Fire of Despair Has Been Our Saviour*) has studied at the University of Iowa and at Harvard where he won the Lloyd Garrison Prize for Poetry in 1950. His verse appeared in the first two issues of THE PARIS REVIEW and in No. 16.

Robert Huff (*The Lay Brother*) is an instructor in English at Wayne State University who will publish his first book of poems this year. His verse has appeared in the *Western Review* and other periodicals.

D. J. Hughes (*Lord Chandos to His Wife*) is married and teaches at Brown. His work has appeared previously in the *Quarterly Review of Literature*, and *I. E.*

Joseph Langland (*Hounds*) teaches at the University of Wyoming. His first book, *The Green Town*, was published by Scribner's in 1956. A frequent contributor to THE PARIS REVIEW, his work has also appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and other publications.

W. S. Merwin (*Two Poems*) is the author of three books of poetry and a play in verse which was produced in London. After his return to America in 1956, he spent a year on a Rockefeller Grant at The Poet's Theater in Cambridge, Mass. and now lives in Boston. His prose and poetry have appeared often in THE PARIS REVIEW.

Louis Simpson (*Two Poems*) teaches English at Columbia. A book of his verse, *Good News of Death*, was published by Scribner, and a poem, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, appeared in our eleventh issue.

W. D. Snodgrass (*The Campus on the Hill*) has taught at Cornell. His verse has appeared in THE PARIS REVIEW No. 14, *Botteghe Oscure*, *The Partisan Review*, and other quarterlies.

William Stafford (*Requiem*) teaches at San Jose State College in California. His poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and *The Western Review*.

George Starbuck (*And Then It May Be Saturday*), studied at Chicago and is currently a graduate student at Harvard.

Charles Tomlinson (*Three Poems*) is an English painter and poet who is published by Fantasy Press. His verse has appeared extensively in England and the United States.

James Wright (*To L., Asleep*) has contributed often to THE PARIS REVIEW. The Yale Younger Poet Committee chose his book, *The Green Wall*, for publication in 1957.

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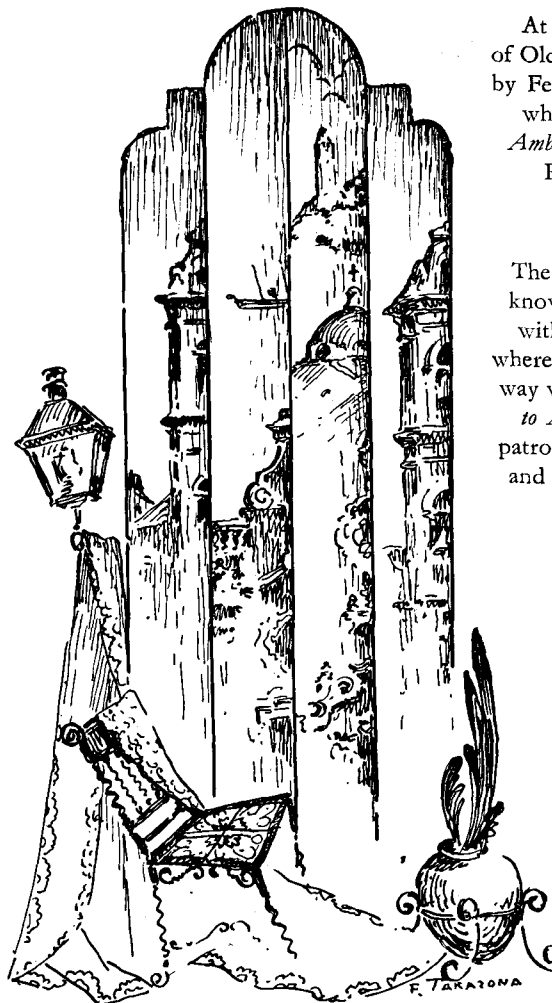
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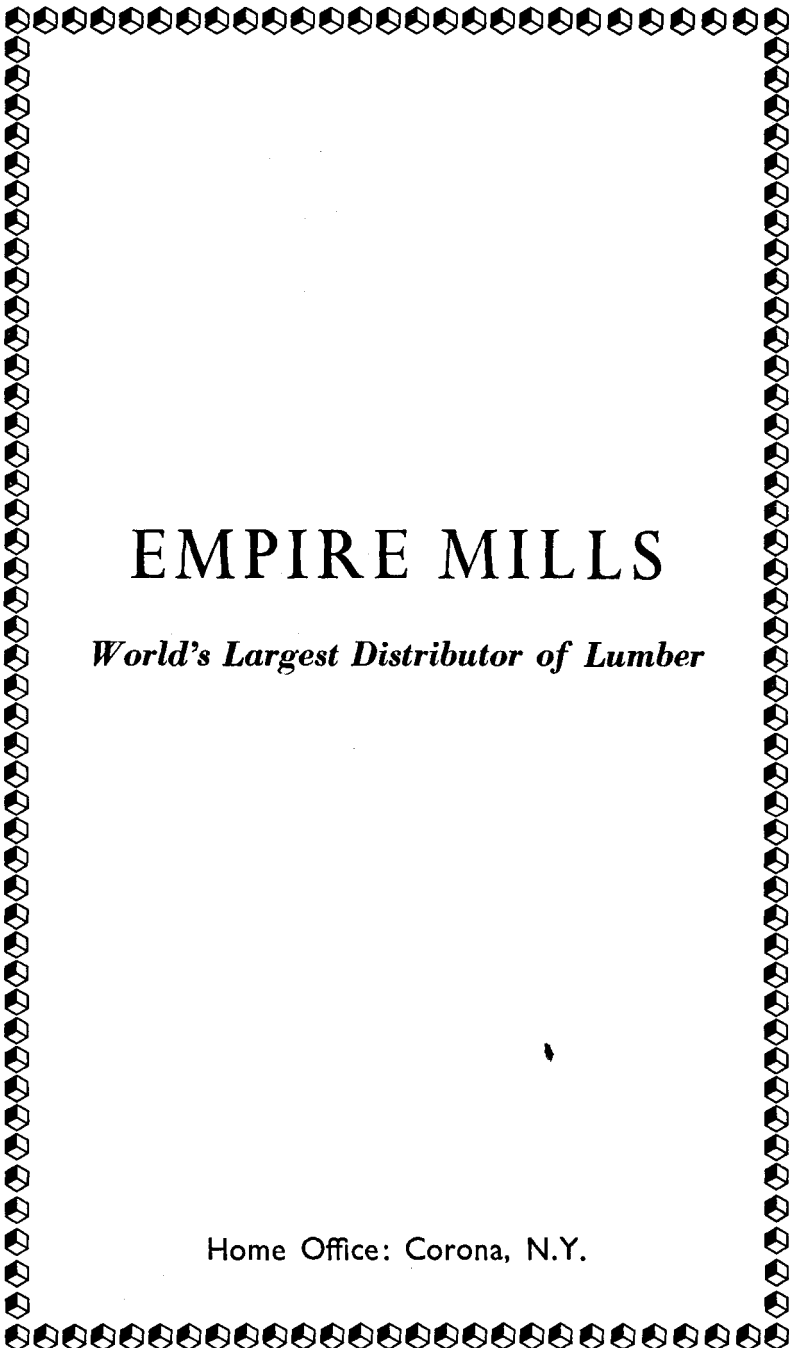
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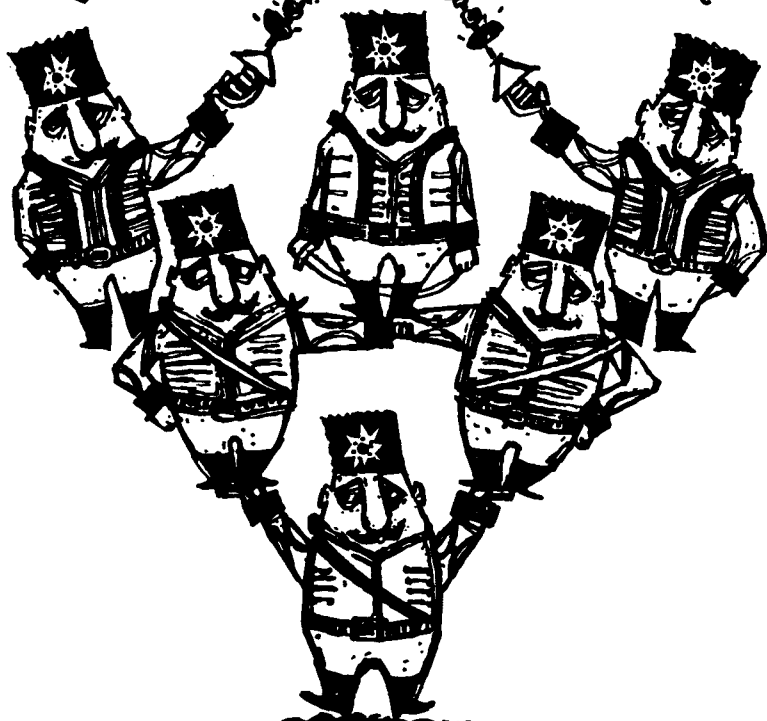


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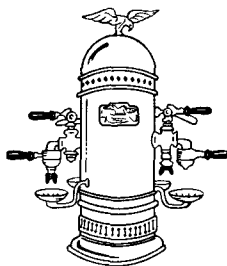
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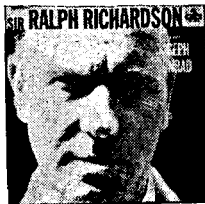
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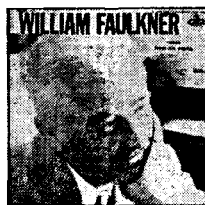
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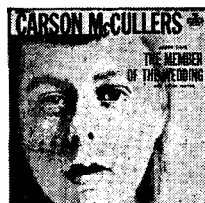
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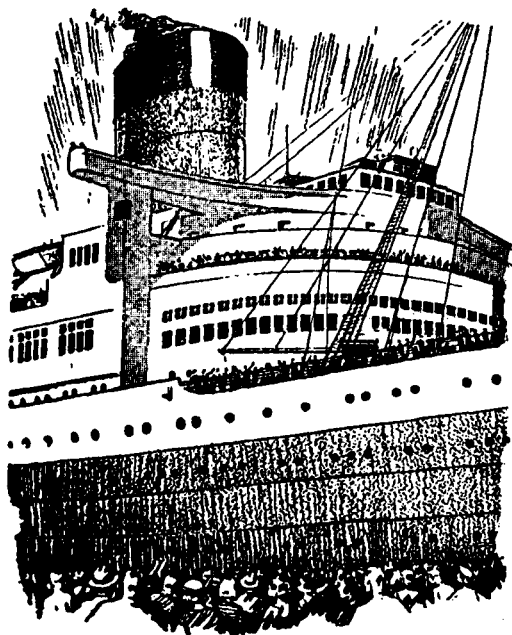
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